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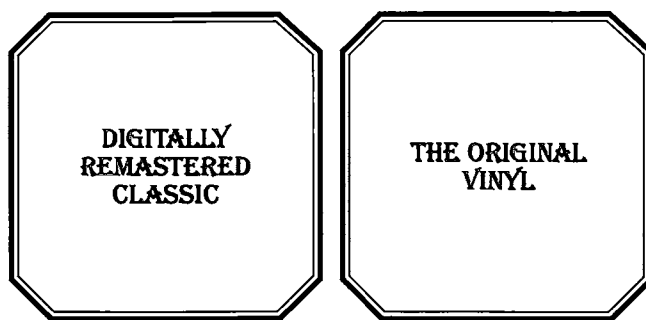
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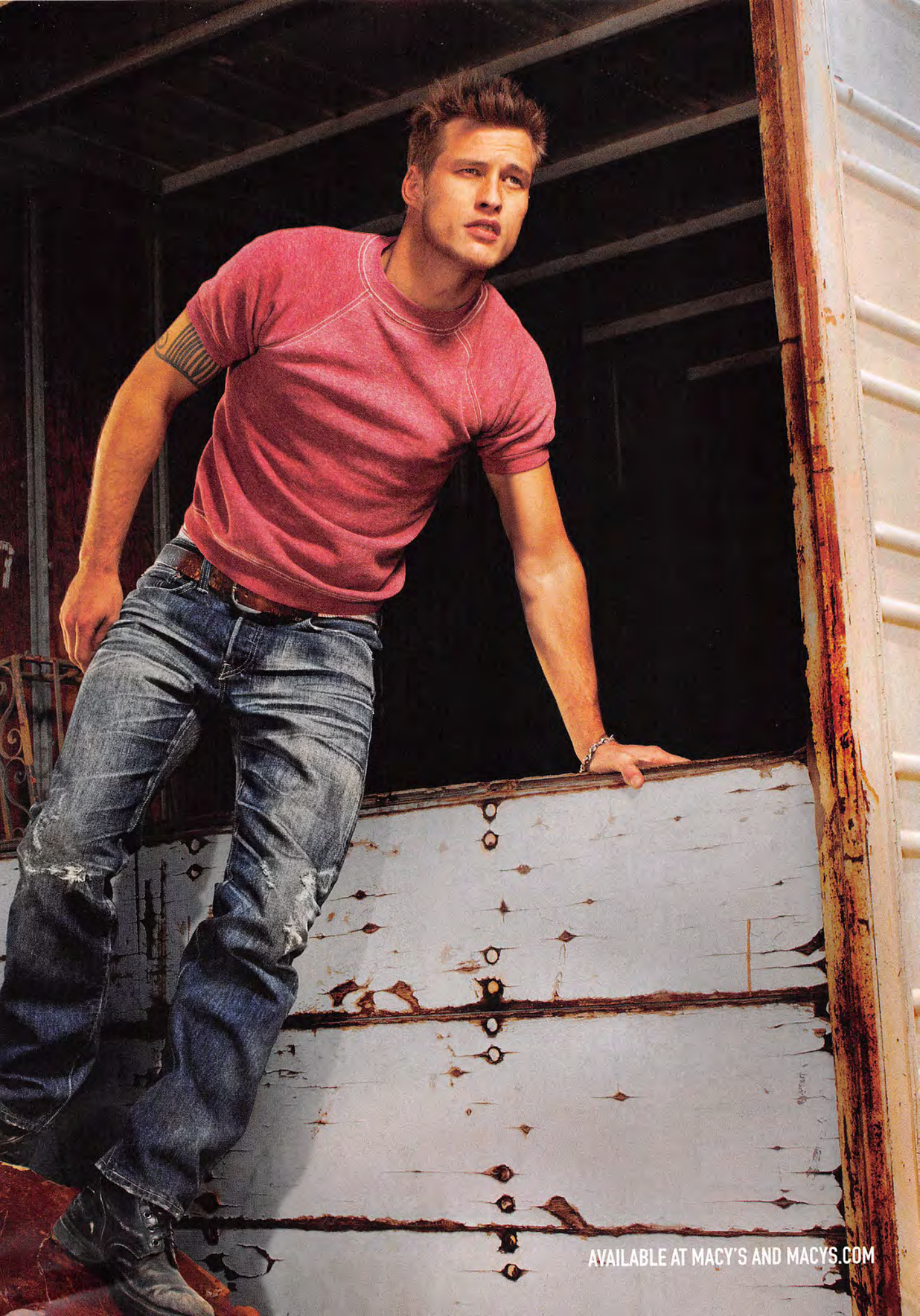


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Lips

Jump in.

XBOX 360



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## 56 T-PAIN

The schlubby, Auto-Tune-addicted crooner is the R&B star for the common man. "Out of the 200 dudes in any club, only six are macks," he says. "I talk to the other 194!"

## 60 DAVID COOK

The newest *American Idol* winner gets back to his pre-fame roots: tending bar for an evening, at *Blender's* request. Now if he could just figure out how to make a cosmo.

## 66 MOTORMOUTHS

From the Sugarhill Gang's Lincoln Continental to Vanilla Ice's Mustang 5.0 L to Jay-Z's Maybach, it's our automotive history of hip-hop.

"THERE WAS A VOID IN MUSIC FOR  
A GIRL WHO HAD SOME SASS.  
I KNEW THAT GIRL WAS ME."

—KATY PERRY

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN WATTS

BUSTIER: SMOKE AND MIRRORS; SKIRT: UNIVERSAL COSTUME; BELT AND SHOES: BETSEY JOHNSON; HAT AND BRACELET: OGAMI VINTAGE, L.A.; PINS: MARC BY MARC JACOBS.



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**ON THE COVER**  
KATY PERRY  
PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN WATTS. Styling by Nathalie Saphier for Photogenics Beauty at Smashbox. Hair by Aaron Light for Celestine Agency. Makeup by Erin Smith for Celestine Agency. Prop styling by Jasmine Hamed. Production by First Shot Productions. Vintage bathing suit by Universal Costume. Headband by Gaspard Yurkevich. Shoes and bracelets by Ogami Vintage, L.A.

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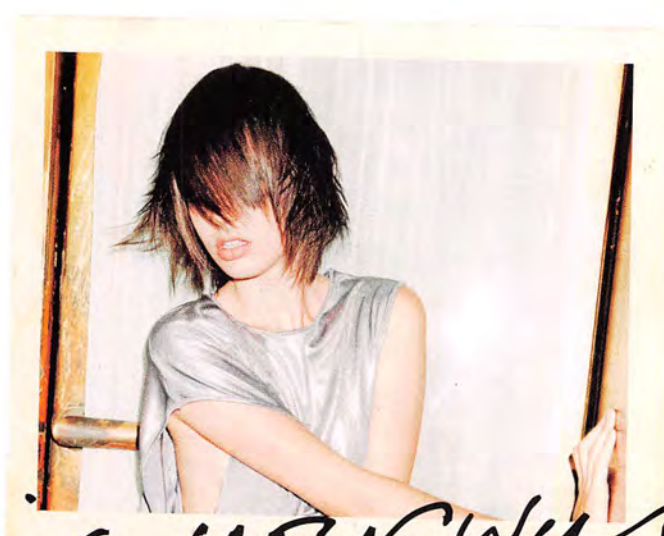
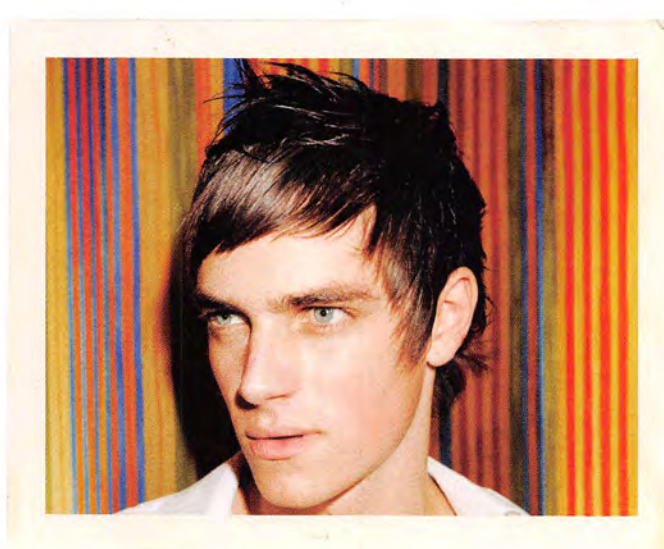
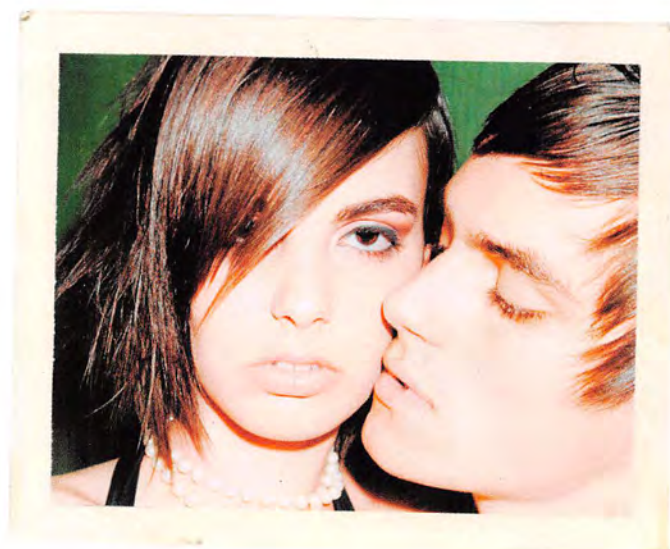
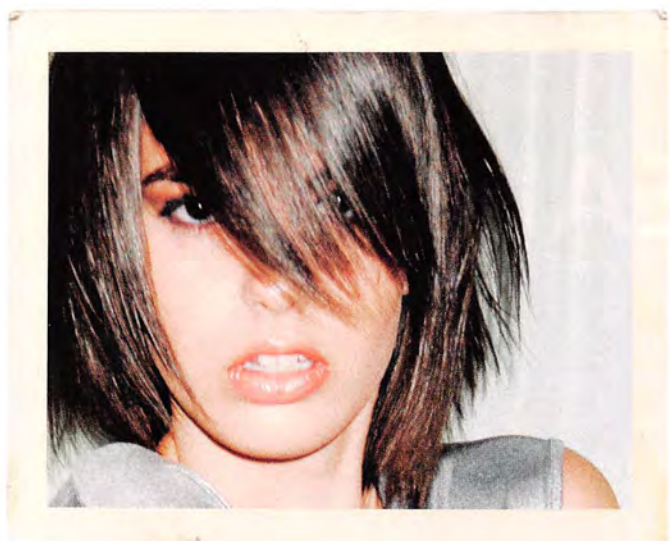
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# THE BLENDER BIBLE

THE HOLY COMMANDMENTS OF POP CULTURE



## 1 T.I. feat. Jay-Z, Kanye West and Lil Wayne

"Swagger Like Us"

GRAND HUSTLE/  
ATLANTIC

Warning: This  
stuttering, oozing  
brag-athon contains  
toxic levels of ego.

### 2 Yacht

"Summer Song"

DFA  
A goofy synth dude  
and a cute synth girl  
whip up a throbbing,  
summery jam  
about throbbing,  
summery jams.

### 3 Fall Out Boy

"Lake Effect Kid  
(Demo)"

Island  
Wentz Inc. is back  
with some hard-  
swinging riffage  
about when arctic  
winds blow over  
warm bodies of  
water. Or something.

### 4 DJ Khaled feat. T-Pain and Kanye West

"Go Hard"

We the Best/Koch  
The most  
Auto-Tuned  
Viagra commercial  
ever made.

### 5 T-Pain feat.

Ludacris  
"Chopped and  
Screwed"

Jive  
The R&B droid  
drags the ATL loud-  
mouth to a club—but  
all the girls are mean  
to them!

### 6 Slipknot

"All Hope Is Gone"

Roadrunner  
Brutal metal chugga-  
chugga about  
apocalypse, world  
domination and, like,  
putrid stuff—party on!

### 7 Vampire

Weekend

"Everywhere"

[Online]  
Fleetwood Mac's  
1987 swoon song gets  
VW's loving, cable-  
knit cover treatment.

### 8 Shontelle

"T-Shirt"

SRC/Universal  
Motown  
A sprightly R&B  
breakup jam that  
doubles as a shame-  
less striptease.

### 9 Maino feat.

Fabulous,  
Jadakiss,  
Swizz Beatz,  
T.I. and Plies

"Hi Hater (Remix)"  
Hustle Hard/Atlantic  
Calling haters who  
felt snubbed the  
first time around:  
Helloooo, there!

### 10 David Byrne & Brian Eno

"Strange  
Overtones"

Everything That  
Happens.com  
The Talking Heads  
dude and the best  
rock producer in  
the cosmos make  
some mellow dance  
sounds together.

### 11 Christina Aguilera

"Keeps Gettin'  
Better"

RCA  
Over a beat that's  
part Max Martin,  
part Depeche Mode,  
Xtina sings sleekly  
about one sexy-ass  
identity crisis.

### 12 John Legend feat. André 3000

"Green Light"

GOOD/Columbia  
The classiest, beige-  
suit-wearingest  
man in R&B hits the  
dance floor with the  
wildest, plaid-wear-  
ingest man in rap.

### 13 Annuals

"Confessor"

Canvasback/Ace Fu/  
Terpsikhore Inc.  
These pasty-faced  
North Carolinians  
like their indie rock  
the way Lorenzo  
Lamas likes his hair:  
lush, windswept  
and dramatic!

### 14 Chairlift

"Planet Health"

Kanine  
A fat-bottomed,  
synthed-out  
funk ballad about  
how childhood  
totally rootz.

### 15 Friendly Fires

"Paris"

XL  
Three U.K. disco  
brats fantasize  
about living it up  
on the euro across  
the channel.

### 16 Pink

"So What"

LaFace/Zomba  
Newly splitsville  
from her hubby,  
Pink rebounds by  
smashing things  
and beating people  
up. Now that's what  
we call therapy!

### 17 Dr. Doom

"Creepin'"

Threshold  
Consider yourself  
warned: Indie rap's  
most demented  
MC will smack you  
with a dead rat and  
turn your fingers  
into hot dogs.

### 18 Keane

"Spiralling"

Interscope  
No more mewling!  
No more wound-  
lickin'! The Brit  
softies strut their  
stuff over '80s-  
dipped pop.

### 19 Bloc Party

"Ares"

Atlantic  
Skinny-shirted  
Brits do their best  
Chemical Brothers  
impression,  
packing a song  
with bunker-buster  
drums and IED  
guitars.

### 20 The Killers

"Human"

Island  
Produced by Stuart  
Price (Madonna),  
a little discotheque  
existentialism  
from the Vegas  
shape-shifters.



## GO HERE

## NEW ORLEANS

The Big Easy lets the good times roll, and not just during Mardi Gras. Soul queen **Irma Thomas** and **Baby** (a.k.a. Birdman) break it down

**1 BEST LOCAL MUSIC SOURCE**  
**LOUISIANA MUSIC FACTORY**

210 Decatur St.  
 This record store specializes in hard-to-find homegrown acts. Irma Thomas, the Grammy-winning soul queen of New Orleans, is a regular: "I'm trying to reestablish the collection I lost in Katrina. If they don't have it, they'll get it for me."

**2 BEST PLACE TO CAST A SPELL**  
**NEW ORLEANS HISTORIC VODOO MUSEUM**

724 Dumaine St.  
 Your one-stop shop for voodoo dolls, gris-gris bags, candles to conjure success in court and chicken feet deployed as protective "juju." Personal spell casting also available.

**3 BEST PLACE TO BALL OUT**  
**SWEET FIRE & ICE**

701 Veterans Memorial Blvd.  
 Al Copeland, the entrepreneur behind the Popeye's chicken empire, created this showy restaurant featuring

an oxygen lounge. Cash Money rapper Baby recommends it: "I don't eat chicken anymore, but this place is off the hook."

**4 BEST PLACE TO STRIKE OUT**  
**MID-CITY LANES ROCK 'N' BOWL**

4133 S. Carrollton Ave.  
 Thomas was initially pissed when the 1940s-era Mid-City Lanes first hosted live music: "I'm a serious bowler, and I was in a league there." But now she sings over the din, as do many of southeast Louisiana's best rhythm & blues, zydeco and brass bands.

**5 BEST TURKEY NECKS**  
**TWO SISTERS KITCHEN**

223 N. Derbigny  
 For 36 years, they've served up okra, stuffed bell peppers and other soul-food favorites. "When I don't feel like cooking," Thomas says, "I bring my own take-home plate and get the corn bread and turkey necks."

KEITH SPERA  
 AND JON COPLON

## WATCH AND PLAY THESE



**GAME**  
**Motorstorm Pacific Rift**

SCEA; PS3  
 Speed around a lush island in a monster truck, or one of seven other vehicles, in this beautifully rendered off-road racer. Disaster-porn bonus: features the most painfully detailed slow-motion car crashes ever in a video game.

**MOVIE**  
**Let the Right One In**

A misfit 12-year-old bonds with the reclusive girl who just moved next door—and who happens to be a vampire.

**DVD**  
**U2 Live at Red Rocks**

Behold a young Bono during his flag-waving, mullet-sporting prime in this legendary 1983 concert film, available on DVD for the first time. Bonus footage: five songs never before seen!

## CLICK ON THESE

**Live on Blender.com—now!**

**Katy Perry**

Check out loads more hot-pants-tastic, girl-kissing-luscious photos from our Katy (right) cover shoot too scorching for print!

**Blender Videocast**

The weekly Blender Burner videocast brings you breaking news, must-have downloads and footage from our photo shoots and interviews. Blender, fresh from the digital oven!

**Best Simpsons Music Moments Ever**

The Rolling Stones, the White Stripes—we name the finest groups to ever have their tour bus break down in Springfield.



PERRY: BEN WATTS





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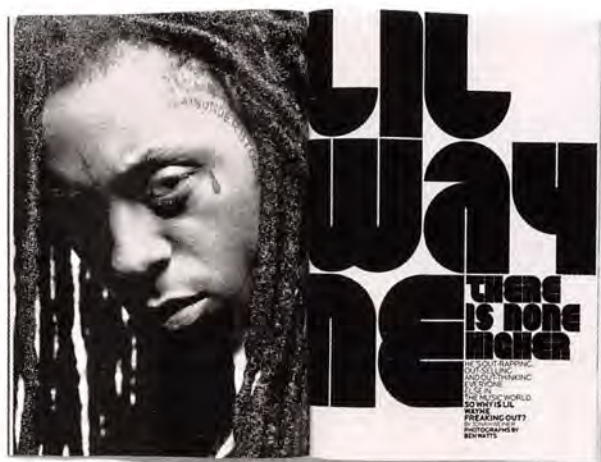


We've Got

# mail

Because sharing is caring

Readers were split on our September cover story on **Lil Wayne** ("There Is None Higher"). While some hailed our decision to put the hip-hop madman on our cover, others complained that Weezy has received way too much coverage in *Blender* already. Meanwhile, our piece in which Barack Obama and John McCain listed their top 10 songs ("White House DJ Battle!") made national news when McCain addressed his selection of ABBA's "Dancing Queen" during an Aspen Institute Q&A. "If there's anything I'm lacking in ... it's taste in music and art and other great things in life," McCain admitted. On that note, a *Blender* public-service announcement: Get out and vote, kids!



## HOT BOY

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I just received the September issue of *Blender*, and I've never felt a greater need to write to a magazine. I was a little disappointed with your choice of cover subjects for the last couple of issues, but you completely made up for it with your latest pick, Lil Wayne. I'm so happy to finally see some true talent recognized in your magazine.

ALEX CROW, CHICAGO

## MAKIN' WHOOP!

Yikes! Regarding your September cover: Whoopi Goldberg is looking pretty bad these days. Oh, wait, never mind ...

KENNY FLORIO, MONMOUTH BEACH, NJ

## WAYNE, WAYNE, GO AWAY

I'm starting to think Lil Wayne owns your damn publication. Granted, his shit is good. But do

we really need to hear about it every issue? You've done three major stories on him in the last six months. Enough already! There's more and better stuff out there, and I am sick of his damn teardrop-tattooed face.

JULIA WILSON, NEW YORK

**Let's just say that a nice gift basket of Xanax and sizzurp goes a long way over here.**

## BURNIN' UP

I don't often write letters to magazines but felt compelled to do so after reading Josh Eells's review of the Jonas Brothers album. Specifically, this part: "The Jonas Brothers are basically like the Beatles, only more talented and sooo much cuter." How did such an outrageous statement make it to print?

EVAN KREMIN, NEW YORK

**You have a point, Evan. Paul was pretty cute.**

## FUHRER FUROR

Randy Newman's "Then again, Hitler liked some good music, you know?" comment regarding John McCain's favorite-song choices shows Newman's stupidity. I don't care for *either* major candidate, but can we please stop the incessant Hitler/Republican comparisons?

DEAN TICKS, KIMBERLY, WI

## GIRL-ON-GIRL POWER

Instead of wasting space in your magazine on Katy Perry ("Elements of Style," September), why don't you feature some *real* lesbians who are actually cute and actually have talent (like Tegan and Sara)? Come on, *Blender*, I think you can find much better musicians than Katy Perry to write about.

KAYLEE FRICK, BUFFALO, NY

**Who is this "Katy Perry" of which you speak?**

IF POP STARS WERE DOGS ...



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THE POP STAR



LOLA  
THE DOG

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Some of the battles got  
more heated than others.

This girl scored so high, confetti shot  
out of the ceiling. True story. Check out  
the video on My SingStar online.

She couldn't remember my name  
but knew every word of "Black  
to Black" by Amy Winehouse.

Don't stand so close to me  
Don't stand

When everyone lost their voices, we  
let the real videos play on a loop.



Lyrics  
Sexual Themes  
Use of Alcohol  
Use of Tobacco



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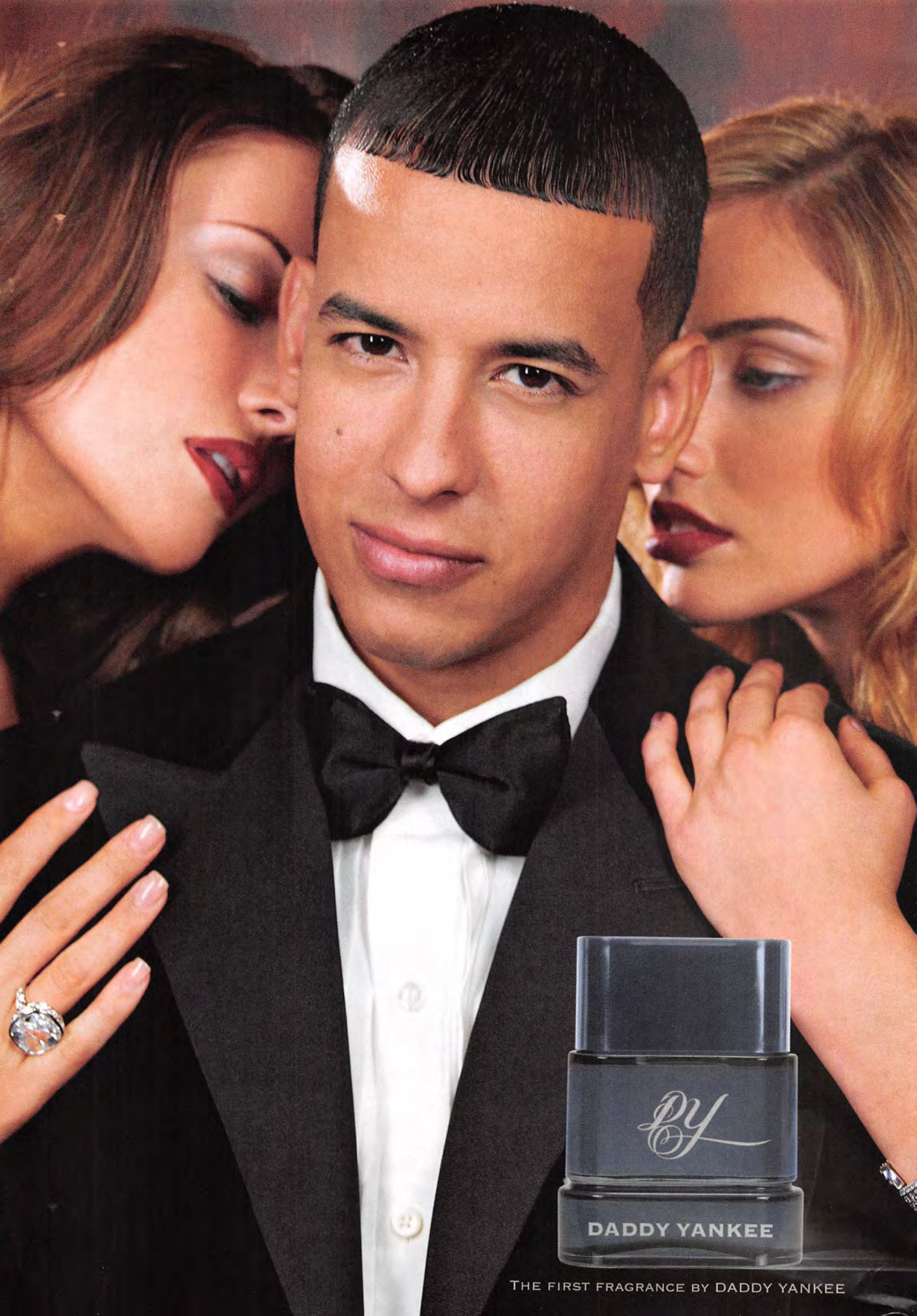
No girl can resist singing  
"Girls Just Want to Have Fun."  
We downloaded the song off the  
PlayStation Network to prove it.

This guy was unstoppable!  
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8,000 points on all 30 songs!

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& videos, visit  
[www.SingStarGame.com](http://www.SingStarGame.com)







THE FIRST FRAGRANCE BY DADDY YANKEE



# BURGER



## POP-STAR DRESS-UP!

THIS HALLOWEEN, DRACULA AND FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER HAVE NOTHING ON WINEHOUSE AND WEEZY

**No self-respecting adult trick-or-treater** merely dusts off last year's Amy Winehouse wig and expects to haul in a plastic pumpkin full of candy. Amy as a zombie? Now *that's* a twist, especially in a year when the wobbly warbler got all *28 Days Later*, hitting the streets of London in the middle of the night, probably mumbling something about "more brains." And Jay-Z and Beyoncé are clearly the new vampires—no one is that beautiful or powerful without drinking the blood of the living. But a smart costume seeker need look no further than Lil Wayne—with his *Predator*-like dreads, face tats, leather vest and outer-space persona. He said it himself: *OK, you're a goon, but what's a goon to a goblin?* This is a man who knows from lollipops. BY MIKAEL WOOD



TRACK OR TREAT

# BE A MONSTER OF ROCK

Five hit-maker costumes with Halloween twists

"WHERE ARE YOUR IDEAS/YOU SIT AROUND AND DREAM/FOR NEXT HALLOWEEN."

**01 THE VISITOR**  
**LIL WAYNE**

- Hemp pop:** Lick, lick, give. \$9.95 for a dozen (hempcandy.com).
- Dreadlock wig:** Old marijuana seeds not included. \$15 (windycitynovelties.com).
- Temporary tattoos:** Perfect for faces and much more convenient than authentic ink! 99 cents and up (funtoos.com).
- Red leather vest:** \$19 (myleather.com). Go shirtless for a gigolo street vibe or add an A-shirt (\$13 for pack of three at hanes.com) for a more dapper look.
- Boxer shorts:** For covering up what extra-saggy jeans (redmonkeyjeans.com) don't. From \$7.50 (jockey.com).
- Styrofoam cup:** For sippin' sizzurp. 10 cents (local bodega).
- Halloween twist:** FXGreen Face Paint, \$6.99 (brandsale.com); alien antennae, \$3.99 (buycostumes.com).

**RAINBOW BRIGHT 02**  
**M.I.A.**

- The skipper yacht cap:** For navigating the choppy waters of international political pop. \$34 (hatsinthebelfry.com).
- Pure White colored wig:** \$21.99 (bewild.com).
- Nü rave threads:** Shop where M.I.A. shops, her own store (miauk.com).
- Short shorts:** The gateway to world peace. From \$32 (americanapparel.net).
- Dolce & Gabbana high-tops:** \$295 (eluxury.com)—or 20 bucks or so for knock-offs at your neighborhood swap meet.
- Paper planes:** Free. Chuck randomly throughout evening.
- Halloween twist:** Merge above elements with leggings, belt and wand from Sexy Rainbow Brite Costume, \$52 (pinupgirlclothing.com).

**03 ZOMBIE**  
**AMY WINEHOUSE**

- Amy Winehouse wig:** Perfect for accentuating a tipsy stagger. \$20 (partywiththis.com).
- Black mascara:** Smear with abandon. \$2 (walgreens.com).
- Aggressively pit-stained belly shirt:** Pay no more than 79 cents (goodwill.org).
- Bloody brain (fake):** \$7.99 (buycostumes.com).
- High-ridin' jean shorts (jorts):** Also useful for portraying Jessica Simpson. \$26 (gapkids.com).
- Ballet flats:** Must lose at least one by 2 A.M. \$18 (payless.com).
- Halloween twist:** Small Slash Kit for arms and neck, because actual self-mutilation is not advisable. \$2.29 (mooncostumes.com). EZ FX Open Wound Kit, apply to face. \$13 (halloweenexpress.com).

**DRACULA AND HIS WIFE 04**  
**JAY-Z AND BEYONCÉ**

- New Jersey Nets hat:** Jay's a big fan—and part-owner of the team. \$20 (lids.com).
- Forever Young wig:** Beyoncé's hair costs more than your house; this one's \$40 (voguewigs.com).
- Black evening gown:** Buy one size too small to transform into freakum dress. From \$10 or so at Salvation Army.
- Tuxedo:** Jay owns only designer threads. You'll be renting from Tuxedo Junction. \$120 (tuxedojunction.com).
- Mic:** \$2.95 (ustoy.com).
- Deluxe Hip and Butt Padded Panty:** \$26.99 (feelfoxy.com).
- Money:** Hova never leaves home without it (prankplace.com/funnymoney).
- Halloween twist:** LED Flashing Fangs, \$14.49; Vampire Bite Tattoos, \$4.47; Nosferatu Makeup, \$5.99; and cape, \$4 (orientaltrading.com).





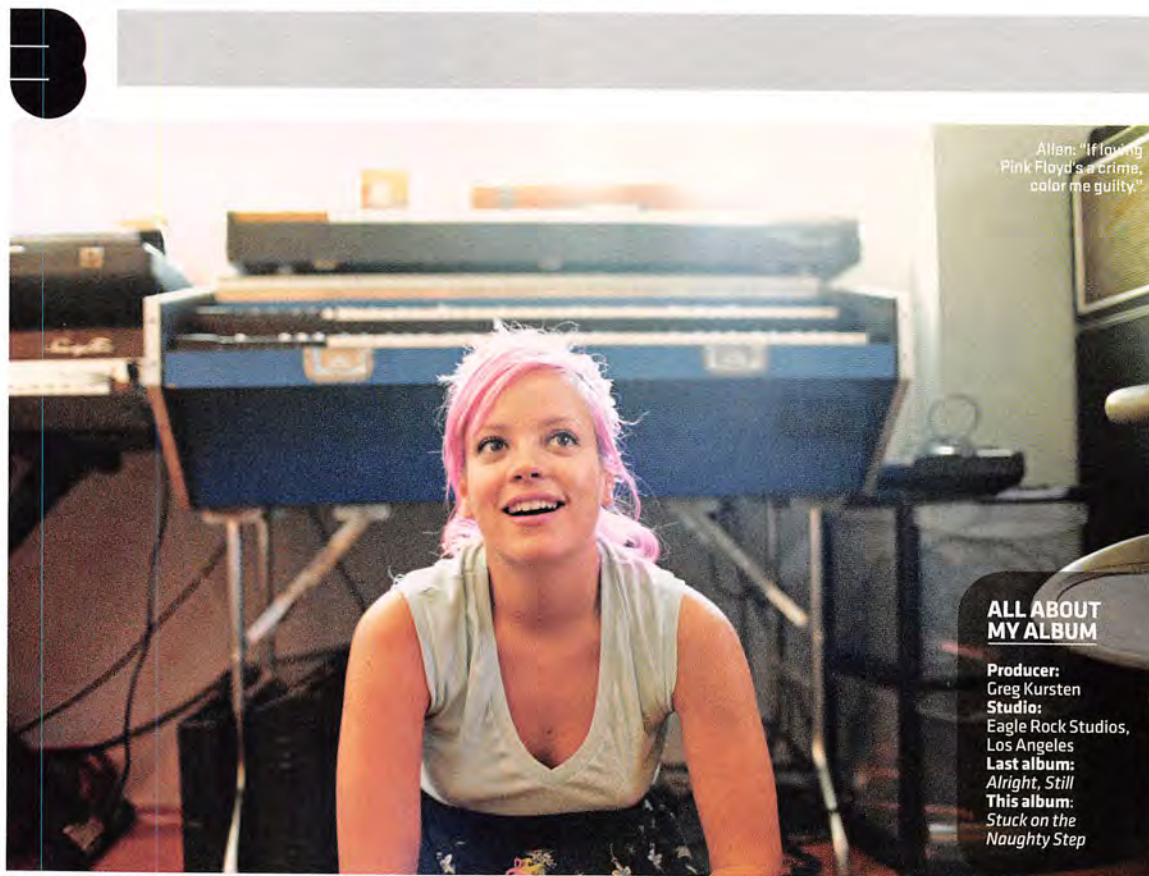
Pictured from left to right: LCDR Mark Simon, ETCM Eric Olis, BMC Dan Ames, BM1 Michael O'Connell,  
EN1 Jason Fetterman, EM2 Mark DiPietro, LT Lewis Baker, MM2 Sergio Rodriguez

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Allen: "If I'm going Pink Floyd's a crime, color me guilty."

#### ALL ABOUT MY ALBUM

**Producer:** Greg Kursten  
**Studio:** Eagle Rock Studios, Los Angeles  
**Last album:** *Alright, Still*  
**This album:** *Stuck on the Naughty Step*

## IN THE STUDIO "A BIT MORE CRAZY"

CHAOS INSPIRES A LILY ALLEN RECORD THAT'S PART GOD, PART COUNTRY AND ALL MIDDLE FINGER

**Remember the simpler days** when British sprite Lily Allen posted almost all of her last hip-hop- and dancehall-flavored album on MySpace? This time, she has leaked only a couple of demos and tidbits, and she seems sidetracked by tussles with Perez Hilton, the paparazzi, Elton John and at least one bystander whom she allegedly pummeled on her path to scandal-sheet infamy.

"The stuff about me in the tabloids is about some person I don't know, so that's upsetting and annoying," Allen says. A miscarriage and the breakup of her hot-and-heavy romance with Chemical Brother Ed Simons added to the most tumultuous time in her 23 years. A lot of that went down as she readied an album that is complete but not due for release until early 2009 ("I don't really know what's going on with it," she wrote in an EMI-dissing post on her blog). She recorded many of the songs in June, after moving sessions from her producer Greg Kursten's house to Eagle Rock Studios in L.A.—the "razzi" were annoying his neighbors. With

Kursten, a jazz-piano prodigy who worked with Allen on *Alright, Still*, she cranked out 18 or 19 new tracks.

Early titles "Who'd of Known," "Everyone's at It," "He Wasn't There," "Not Fair" and "Go Back to the Start" seem tantalizingly autobiographical—though Allen says otherwise: "My life is very surreal, and I think it's difficult to put it in songs and have it translate well." There is, however, a "God song," called "CCR," in which Allen wonders what He or She might be like. (One of us?) "I don't think there's a particular style that runs through the record this time," she adds, and definitely not the ska rhythms that dominated *Alright, Still*. There's a flapper-era tune, a song with a country-western back beat, an early-'80s freestyle and a club banger with thundering synth bass and Allen's own airy vocals, which makes sense for the former E dealer. "It was quite intentional to be a bit more dance-y," she says. "I wanna be able to dance more onstage and go a bit more crazy." TRICIA ROMANO



#### ALSO IN THE STUDIO

• Indie-rock pioneers **Sonic Youth** are back recording for an indie label (Matador), having left Geffen. A new album is due in spring '09.  
 • **Chino Moreno** and his **Deftones** are completing a sixth studio album at Studio X in Seattle, their first since 2006, tentatively titled *Eros* and due out in January 2009.

• Tabloid fave **Britney Spears** is working with **Danja** (Justin Timberlake) and her once-rumored babydaddy **J.R. Rotem** (50 Cent) for an as-yet-untitled 2009 album.  
 • Houston rapper **Bun B** is finishing a final **UGK** album featuring rhymes Pimp C cut before his untimely death last December. Look for it early next year.



#### BLENDER'S BURNING QUESTION

HOW WILL JONAS BROTHER KEVIN CELEBRATE HIS 21ST BIRTHDAY (NOV. 5)?

30%

By finally shaving

8%

Heartfelt prayer circle with other JoBros

42%

With a Demi Lovato/Selena Gomez sandwich

20%

Hookers and blow

**Reader Wisdom**  
**"Twenty-one shots of Yoo-hoo!"**

—Julian Grose, Tempe, AZ

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**1. KNOW YOUR GEAR**

"First, figure out how heavy the bike is so that it don't tip over and crush your leg. Also, there's a lot of corny-looking bikers out there with crazy one-piece leather joints, but there are motorcycle fashions that allow you to not look like a Herb. Hip-hop cats, wear your size for safety—go a bit Kanye."

**2. NO BIKER BALLET**

"You gotta be safe. Wyclef was telling me how he rode across the Manhattan Bridge in a ballerina pose—like, standing up on the bike with one leg up. I say, only do that while the bike is standing still. Or start out on a closed dirt-bike track with kneepads, a helmet, all that good stuff."

**3. TOW A HO**

"In Jamaica, there's a thing they call a *bike-back*—a girl on the back of your motorcycle. So, have a bike-back at all times. It's more comfortable with a fly female holding onto your waist. And revving's the same turn-on for her as sitting on the washing machine on the spin cycle, so rev a lot!"

**4. DON'T TOW A BRO**

"It's the one thing that you definitely do *not* do. For me, the riding-behind-a-dude thing is not a good look. I don't think I've ever seen a dude ride behind another dude on a motorcycle and have it look remotely cool. Spooning on the bike is not the hot thing at all."

## HOW TO TAME A STEEL HORSE

SIX-FOOT-FOUR REGGAE-TINGED "DANGEROUS" RAPPER (AND CANADIAN) KARDINAL OFFISHALL OFFERS TIPS FOR STRADDLING A 550-POUND BEAST  
PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHIAS CLAMER



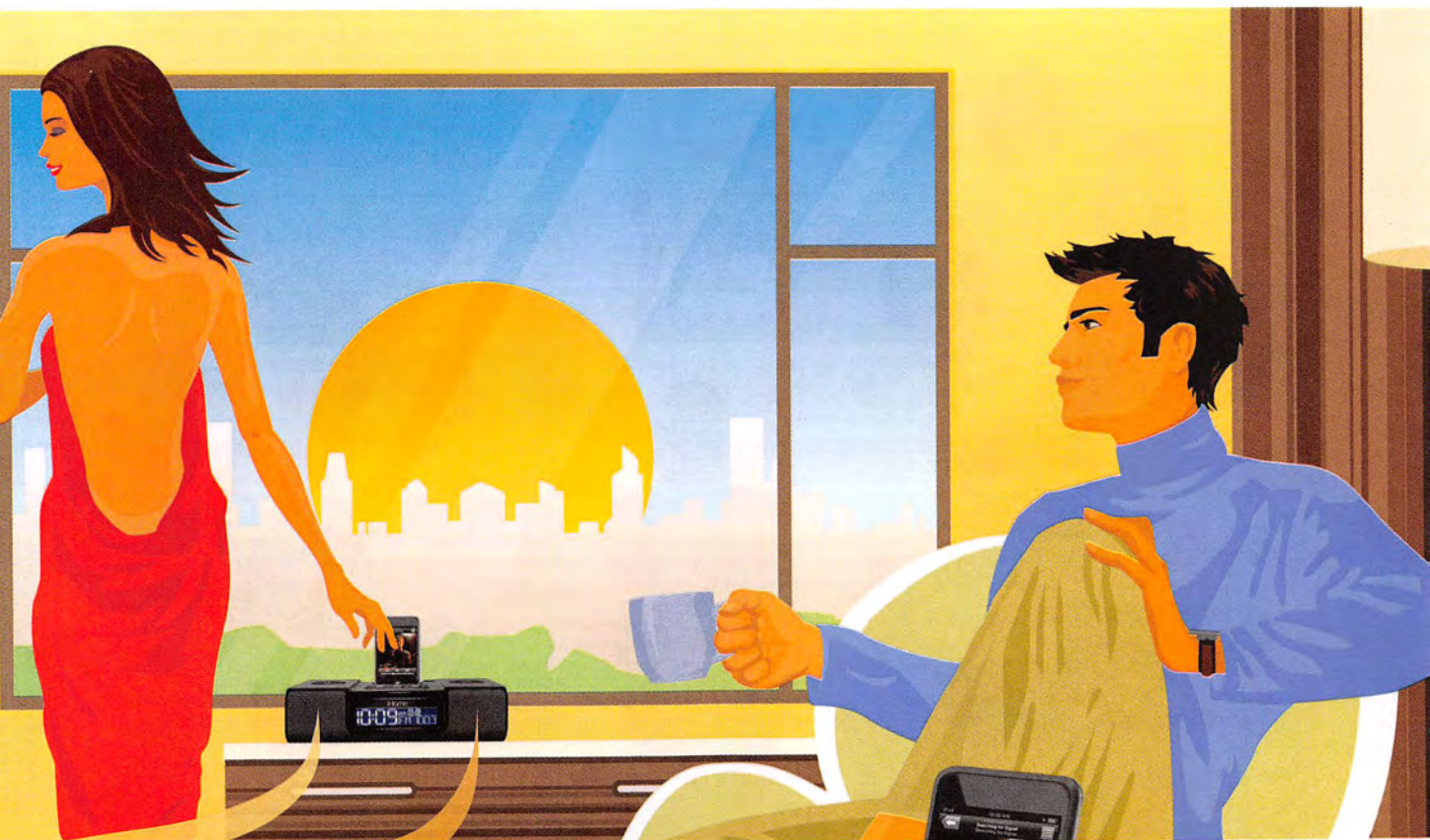
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[INTERSCOPE]

Kardinal Offishall:  
"Is there a problem, officer?"





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# LENKA

THE SAUCY AUSSIE FINDS HER INNER MINX AND CREATES A DOWN-UNDER KIND OF BUZZ • BY ELIZABETH GOODMAN  
PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNETH CAPPELLO

It's not every piano-pop princess who owes her big break to a vibrator. But there was Lenka's "Follow," underscoring a scene in the FX celebrity-tabloid dramedy *Dirt*, in which its star got busy with her magic wand. "I don't necessarily enjoy watching Courteney Cox masturbate, but I do enjoy the idea of my songs going alongside a character," Lenka says. "I really get off on that."

After singing with a hipster electro band for years, she has embraced her undeniable cuteness on a solo record full of bouncy, girly-voiced pop that will give even the staunchest Sara Bareilles fans a sugar rush (for balance, she also released a cover of Modest Mouse's "Gravity Rides Everything"). To drive home her new persona, Lenka recently performed next to a giant bubblegum machine at a kitschy candy shop in New York. "I feel like a 5-year-old most of the time," she says (she won't give her age, but press clips suggest she's close to 30). "I'm very big on escaping to a land that's not quite real."

Born Lenka Kripac, she was raised by hippie parents amid the eucalyptus trees and arid beaches of New South Wales and studied acting under Cate Blanchett. "We had on blindfolds, and she was a wolf," Lenka says. "She would come near you and breathe in your ear. It was seriously scary." As an art-school punk and part-time model, she rebelled against her precious upbringing, briefly appearing topless in the indie slasher flick *Lost Things* and glumly fronting the band Decoder Ring. "I just stood there and sang and didn't do anything," she says.

She's still that dour girl singing about heart-break, loss of self and betrayal. But quirkier. "On the surface, most of the songs have this goofy, upbeat, jolly mood," she says. "They set up something very depressing and then make light of it."

## ALL ABOUT ME!

### Must-see TV

"*Ugly Betty*. My song is on the promo, so I feel tied up with it now ..."

### Worst job

"Working in a hot-nut bar in a mall."

### Best childhood memory

"Running around in the bush singing to trees."

### Most Australian thing about you

"I miss swimming naked in the ocean at night. I haven't done it since I left!"



**OUT NOW**  
*Lenka*  
[EPIC]

No one plays musical chairs hotter than Lenka. *No one.*





## HAIR TRANSPLANT

# THE GREAT SLEAZE-METAL MIGRATION

SOMETHING'S CALLING SPANDEX-CLAD '80S ROCKERS TO NASHVILLE, AND IT AIN'T JUST A LOVE OF FAITH HILL **BY TAL PINCHEVSKY**

### HO-DOWNS!

#### Bret Michaels

Singer-guitarist for Poison

Hits: "Every Rose Has Its Thorn," "Talk Dirty to Me"

Origin: L.A.

Started splitting time between Music City and L.A. in 2005. Nashville is his escape from the *Rock of Love* skank parade. "It's a city where you can create from the heart without losing your mind," he says.

### BRO-DOWNS!

#### Gunnar Nelson

Vocals, guitar, Thing 2 in Nelson

Hit: "(Can't Live Without Your) Love and Affection"

Origin: L.A.

Moved in 1998 and formed supergroup Scrap Metal with Mark Slaughter and Night

Ranger's Kelly Keagy. "It's a great place to raise a family. I could get a mansion here," Nelson says.

### CHEAP TRICKS!

#### Mark Slaughter

Vocalist for Slaughter

Hits: "Up All Night,"

"Fly to the Angels"

Origin: Las Vegas

Relocated in '96 to Nashville and found voice-over work. "Vegas is a fun place to party, but there's more of a music community here," Slaughter says. "And like Las Vegas, there's no state income tax."

### SKEEZE-FREE SCENE!

#### Tom Keifer

Cinderella shrieker

Hits: "Nobody's Fool,"

"Don't Know What You Got

(Till It's Gone)"

Origin: Philadelphia

Migrated in '97. "I went looking for a new scene," he told the *Philadelphia City Paper*. He now collaborates with country artist Andy Griggs.

### NO ONE REMEMBERS BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD!

#### Kip Winger

Dentally superb Winger singer, bassist

Hits: "Seventeen,"

"Easy Come Easy Go"

Origin: L.A.

Moved in '02 after Winger became the butt of *Beavis and Butt-head* jokes. Kip went solo and remodeled houses but returned to Winger for a 2006 record that even Beavis and Butt-head haven't heard.



WORD!



"YOU ARE STILL WELCOME TO ATTEND OUR CONCERT, BUT JUST AS A SAFETY PRECAUTION, PLEASE WEAR A HOCKEY MASK."

—BILLY JOEL, TO A CRITIC

### DO YOU ROCK?

## BEN FOLDS

He's "Rockin' the Suburbs," but does the North Carolina key-tinkler rock the world at large?

### BIGGEST CELEB'S HOME YOU'VE GOTTEN DRUNK IN?

WILLIAM SHATNER. WE WERE HAVING DINNER NEAR DISNEYLAND, AND WE JUST WALKED OVER AND HE MANAGED TO GET THEM TO OPEN A RIDE FOR US AT 11 P.M.

### EVER BEEN DECLARED LEGALLY DEAD?

CAREER-WISE.

### EVER KILLED AN ANIMAL?

I DECAPITATED A COUPLE-HUNDRED-POUND BLACK BEAR WHILE GOING ABOUT 80 MPH IN THE TOUR VAN. HE'D JUST BEEN EATING ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, AND I GUESS HE LOOKED UP. HE STILL HAD GRASS IN HIS MOUTH. IT TOTALED THE VAN'S FRONT END.

### IS THERE A STRIPPER POLE IN YOUR HOUSE?

NO. I'VE GOT A TRAMPOLINE. BUT IF ANY

Mile-high club member.



STRIPPERS WANT TO COME OVER AND JUMP, THEY ARE WELCOME—AS LONG AS THEY HAVE INSURANCE.

### EVER GET LUCKY ON A PLANE?

THAT'S HOW I MET MY CURRENT WIFE.

### VERDICT!

CRASHING DISNEYLAND WITH CAP'N KIRK AND BEAR BRAINS IN THE GRILLE? BEN FOLDS ROCKS! JON COPLON

OUT NOW WAY TO NORMAL (EPIC)

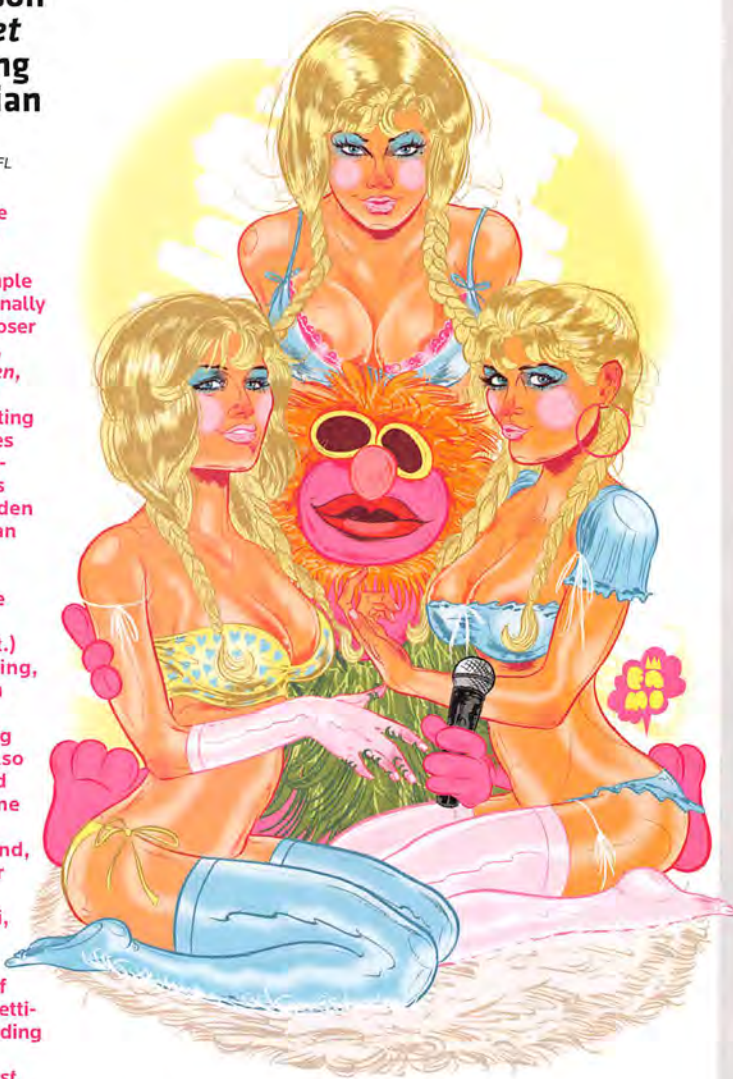


## I heard Jim Henson stole *The Muppet Show* theme song from an old Italian porno. True?

Tabitha Guzman, Pompano Beach, FL

**Almost.** The song isn't the *Muppet Show* theme, but a catchy number called "Mah Na Mah Na." The simple four-note melody was originally written by the Italian composer Piero Umiliani for *Svezia, Inferno e Paradiso* (Sweden, Heaven and Hell), a 1968 soft-core porn film purporting to document Swedish babes and their wild, lingonberry-loving ways. The movie was reportedly banned in Sweden for its depictions of lesbian sex, wife-swapping and general Scandinavian debauchery. (Hit YouTube for a clip of the song in its original, NSFW context.)

Since Henson's reworking, the tune has been used in a number of non-X-rated spots, including ads for Big Lots and Dr Pepper. It's also been covered by Cake and partially inspired the name of the Portland, Oregon, indie band Menomena. And, bonus factoid! The singer on Umiliani's version, Alessandro Alessandroni, was a longtime Ennio Morricone collaborator who whistled on several of Morricone's famous spaghetti-Western soundtracks, including *A Fistful of Dollars* and *Once Upon a Time in the West*.



I got this new program on my iPhone that can recognize pretty much any song ever. How do they do that?

Chester Lutz, Erie, PA



**Get the app** Apple's song-recognition technology uses an application called Shazam, also available on most new Verizon, Motorola and T-Mobile phones. (You can find hack versions online.)



**Let the music play** Hold your phone up to an audio source. Shazam translates the melody and other musical cues into a mathematical model. Company VP Kathleen McMahon calls it "algorithm magic."



**Kick back and wait ... a millisecond** "At this point," McMahon says, "it's a matter of simply matching data points." Shazam takes the mathematical info and trolls its 6 million-plus tracks for a match.



**Beam it down, Scotty** Once Shazam finds a match, it beams it back, even differentiating between dirty and radio edits. "People think there's a big warehouse full of workers," McMahon says. "But it's just a computer."



**How is it possible that *Girl Talk* hasn't been sued for copyright infringement?**

Nick Mathis, Brentwood, CA

It does seem a little crazy that the Pittsburgh mash-up DJ (Gregg Gillis) has thus far avoided getting busted for intellectual-property-jacking. But sure enough, he appears to have Lady Justice on his side. According to Lawrence Lessig—Stanford Law School professor and author of the forthcoming *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*—"Girl Talk falls under the category of 'fair use.'" That's the doctrine that allows reproduction of a copyrighted work without permission for purposes such as criticism, commentary and scholarship. Because Gillis uses tiny snippets in a "transformative" manner, and because his samples are unlikely to hurt the market value of the original work, "there's little doubt he'd win any suit brought against him," Lessig says. Plus, he adds, "no one wants to be seen as a plaintiff against creativity. Not even record companies."



Girl Talk:  
Also  
dances  
like a girl.

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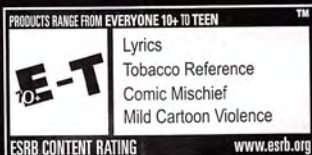


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14 YEARS  
AGO  
THIS  
MONTH

NOVEMBER



Sonny Bono is elected to the House of Representatives.



At 45, George Foreman becomes the oldest heavyweight champion ever.



Trekkies rejoice! *Star Trek: Generations* is No. 1 at the box office.



Convicted serial killer and cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer is killed in prison.



Boyz II Men's "I'll Make Love to You" tops the charts for the 14th consecutive week.



2Pac is shot five times in New York while on trial for sex and weapons charges.



Netscape Navigator's free software starts the browser wars.

## WEEZER "BUDDY HOLLY"

HOW FOUR L.A. ROCKERS CREATED THE DEFINITIVE HIPSTER-DOOFUS BATTLE CRY BY RYAN DOMBAL

**Making their debut** in May 1994, just one month after Kurt Cobain's suicide, Weezer weren't exactly dressed for a funeral. Whereas Cobain's music rose and fell on the pain he felt as an outcast, Rivers Cuomo was a geek who basked in the role: a Connecticut-bred child of hippies, he rocked a floppy bowl cut and thick-rimmed glasses and specialized in triumphant songs about sweaters, a 12-sided die and man-crushing hard on Peter Dinklage. He remains the king dweeb of '90s alt-rock, yet his signature dweeb anthem, "Buddy Holly," was almost scrapped before it ever had a chance to define a nation of muscle-free misfits.

The year before, Weezer hired former Cars frontman Ric Ocasek to produce their self-titled debut (known as *The Blue Album*). The band didn't mind getting goofy, but they didn't want to get dumb—and there was disagreement between them and Ocasek as to which category "Buddy Holly" belonged in. "We thought 'Buddy Holly' was a novelty—we were leaning toward not including it at all," bassist Matt Sharp tells *Blender* (he left the group in 1998). "But Ric said we'd be stupid to leave it

off the album. We'd come into the studio in the morning and find these little pieces of paper with doodles on them: WE WANT BUDDY HOLLY."

A mash-up of outdated pop references, hip-hop slang and Cars-esque synth squiggles, the song owes its existence to an old Korg keyboard Cuomo had once bummed off a Santa Monica College buddy. "I decided to write some new-wave-influenced songs," Cuomo has said. A few crunched-up chords and Beach Boys-worthy ooo-we-ooos later, "Buddy Holly" was born. The song tells an ambiguously romantic tale: A protagonist and his "girl"—based on a friend Cuomo had met in the college choir, who wore her hair like Mary Tyler Moore—fight for their right to look ridiculous in the face of some "homies dissin'" them. Cuomo labored over the lyrics—"An early version read, 'Ooo-we-ooo, you look just like Ginger Rogers/Oh-oh, I move just like Fred Astaire,'" Cuomo has said—but he remained

unconvinced by the finished product, even after Ocasek insisted on including it on the album. "I thought my songs were so intimate and specific to my life, no one would ever relate to them," Cuomo later recalled.

Instead, the result was *Bonnie and Clyde* for the vintage-duds set—but it wasn't until the Spike Jonze-directed, *Happy Days*-themed video that the song truly broke big. "We basically owe our career to Spike," drummer Patrick Wilson once proclaimed. The clip casts Weezer, clad in creamy varsity cardigans, as the house band at Arnold's Drive-In, seamlessly splicing in footage from the '70s sitcom. (Cuomo went glasses-less, fearing he might look too much like Buddy Holly.) It was a great digital trick—much easier, it turned out, than obtaining permission from the cast. "Potsie didn't want to have anything to do with it," Sharp recalls.

It was only after Weezer's label boss, David Geffen, wrote actor Anson Williams a personal letter that he gave in. The clip became an MTV staple—and Potsie's legacy was safe.

One *Happy Days* star didn't need any convincing: the Fonz. Henry Winkler's son, it turned out, was a Weezer fanatic: "I was happy to do it," Winkler tells *Blender*. But would the Fonz really vouch for a group of such unapologetic squares? Winkler thinks so: "The Fonz would have had Weezer on vinyl." **B**

### VITAL STATISTICS

**Album** *Weezer*  
**Label** DGC  
**Performers** Patrick Wilson (drums); Rivers Cuomo (vocals, guitar); Matt Sharp (bass, vocals); Brian Bell (guitar)  
**Writer** Cuomo  
**Producer** Ric Ocasek  
**Chart debut** November 26, 1994  
**Highest chart position** 18 (*Billboard* Hot 100)



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# THE 33 MOST WANTED SONGS IN AMERICA

PUT AWAY THOSE ID'S, KIDS—THIS MONTH'S TOP THREE IS ALL-AGES!



## DAVID ARCHULETA "CRUSH"

CRUSH [SINGLE]

The 17-year-old moppet affectionately known as Archie debuts with a mid-tempo ballad about puppy love. Awww! Swoon in person when he appears at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade (11/27).

## HOW WE DID IT aolmusic.com

The Most Wanted Songs chart is based on the number of audience searches, downloads and video plays on AOLmusic.com.

| RANK/TITLE                                               | ARTIST                             | ALBUM/LABEL                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 "CRUSH"                                                | DAVID ARCHULETA                    | CRUSH [SINGLE]<br>JIVE                                 |
| 2 "7 THINGS"                                             | MILEY CYRUS                        | BREAKOUT<br>HOLLYWOOD                                  |
| 3 "BURNIN' UP"                                           | JONAS BROTHERS                     | A LITTLE BIT LONGER<br>HOLLYWOOD                       |
| 4 "GOT MONEY"                                            | LIL WAYNE<br>FEAT. T-PAIN          | THA CARTER III<br>YOUNG MONEY/CASH<br>MONEY/UNIVERSAL  |
| 5 "DISTURBIA"                                            | RIHANNA                            | GOOD GIRL GONE BAD:<br>RELOADED<br>SRP/DEF JAM         |
| 6 "HOT N COLD"                                           | KATY PERRY                         | ONE OF THE BOYS<br>CAPITOL                             |
| 7 "I CAN'T BELIEVE IT"                                   | T-PAIN FEAT.<br>LIL WAYNE          | THR33 RINGZ<br>JIVE                                    |
| 8 "THAT SONG IN MY HEAD"                                 | JULIANNE HOUGH                     | JULIANNE HOUGH<br>MERCURY NASHVILLE                    |
| 9 "AIM"                                                  | TYGA                               | NO INTRODUCTION<br>DECAYDANCE/BAT SQUAD                |
| 10 "BAD GIRL"                                            | DANITY KANE FEAT.<br>MISSY ELLIOTT | WELCOME TO THE<br>DOLLHOUSE<br>BAD BOY/ATLANTIC        |
| 11 "LEAVIN'"                                             | JESSE MCCARTNEY                    | DEPARTURE<br>HOLLYWOOD                                 |
| 12 "BETTER IN TIME"                                      | LEONA LEWIS                        | SPIRIT<br>J/SYCO MUSIC                                 |
| 13 "TRADING PLACES"                                      | USHER                              | HERE I STAND<br>LAFACE/ZOMBA                           |
| 14 "THE SHOCK OF THE LIGHTNING"                          | OASIS                              | DIG OUT YOUR SOUL<br>BIG BROTHER/<br>WARNER BROS.      |
| 15 "WHATEVER YOU LIKE"                                   | T.I.                               | PAPER TRAIL<br>GRAND HUSTLE/ATLANTIC                   |
| 16 "ONE STEP AT A TIME"                                  | JORDIN SPARKS                      | JORDIN SPARKS JIVE                                     |
| 17 "BODY ON ME"                                          | NELLY FEAT.<br>AKON AND ASHANTI    | BRASS KNUCKLES<br>UNIVERSAL                            |
| 18 "SO WHAT"                                             | PINK                               | FUNHOUSE<br>LAFACE/ZOMBA                               |
| 19 "ID ENGAGER"                                          | OF MONTREAL                        | SKELETAL LAMPING<br>POLYVINYL                          |
| 20 "MISS INDEPENDENT"                                    | NE-YO                              | YEAR OF THE<br>GENTLEMAN<br>DEF JAM                    |
| 21 "SUPERWOMAN"                                          | ALICIA KEYS                        | AS I AM<br>J                                           |
| 22 "JOCKIN' JAY-Z"                                       | JAY-Z                              | THE BLUEPRINT 3<br>DEF JAM/ROC-A-FELLA                 |
| 23 "ELEVENSES"                                           | NEIL HALSTEAD                      | OH! MIGHTY ENGINE<br>BRUSHFIRE                         |
| 24 "THOSE GURLZ"                                         | SNOOP DOGG                         | EGO TRIPPIN'<br>DOGGYSTYLE/GEFFEN                      |
| 25 "CONFESSOR"                                           | ANNUALS                            | SUCH FUN<br>CANVASBACK/ACE FU/<br>TERPSIKHORE INC.     |
| 26 "TELL ME SOMETHING<br>I DON'T KNOW"                   | SELENA GOMEZ                       | ANOTHER CINDERELLA<br>STORY SOUNDTRACK<br>RAZOR & TIE  |
| 27 "PAPER PLATE"                                         | GZA/GENIUS                         | PRO TOOLS<br>BABYGRANDE                                |
| 28 "I'M GOOD, I'M GONE"                                  | LYKKE LI                           | YOUTH NOVELS LL                                        |
| 29 "WHEN I GROW UP"                                      | PUSSYCAT DOLLS                     | DOLL DOMINATION<br>A&M/INTERSCOPE                      |
| 30 "THE GEEKS WERE RIGHT"                                | THE FAINT                          | FASCIINATION<br>BLANK WAV                              |
| 31 "BETTER THINGS"                                       | PASSION PIT                        | CHUNK OF CHANGE<br>FRENCHKISS                          |
| 32 "PARANOIA IN<br>Bb MAJOR"                             | THE AVETT BROTHERS                 | INTRODUCING THE<br>AVETT BROTHERS<br>AMERICAN/COLUMBIA |
| 33 "WHY DO THESE<br>PARTIES ALWAYS END<br>THE SAME WAY?" | BENJI HUGHES                       | A LOVE EXTREME<br>NEW WEST                             |



## 9 TYGA "AIM"

NO INTRODUCTION

This Compton rapper—a cousin of Gym Class Heroes' Travis McCoy—busts out with a stomping track about getting some Interweb booty. Scream "OMG" IRL when he tours this month from Atlanta (11/9) to Anaheim, CA.



## 14 OASIS "THE SHOCK OF THE LIGHTNING"

DIG OUT YOUR SOUL Manchester's rockin'-est loudmouths uncork a riffastic jam about Ben Franklin's greatest discovery: love! Catch them all month, across the pond in Glasgow (11/4) or across the border in Mexico City (11/26).



## 21 ALICIA KEYS "SUPERWOMAN"

AS I AM

Finally: a caped crusader we'd actually like to see in spandex. Spend December flying around the Southern Hemisphere with her as she plays Auckland (12/6), Sydney (12/12) and Melbourne (12/17).





Yo hey, I'm Paul, the original Dollar Menuaire. I pretty much live in the moment, most of the time. Like when I signed up for a credit card to score a T-shirt. Didn't need the card, but that shirt was callin' my name. Especially because it was laundry day. And when I need a little pick-me-up, some **SNACK-ISFACTION**, I order off the Dollar Menu without, y'know, preconceiving any notions. Just walk in and let inspiration show me the Fruit & Yogurt Parfait. Or the Side Salad. Or whatever. It's all quality eats. Spontaneity-ness tastes good.



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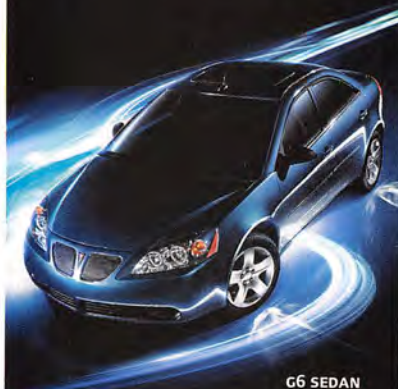
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DEAR SUPERSTAR

# CHRISSIE HYNDE



ON ONE OF THE PRETENDERS' BIGGEST HITS, Chrissie Hynde avowed that "in the middle of the road, you see the darndest things." True enough—right now, what you would see there is a 57-year-old new-wave icon with no apparent fear of death.

It's a Tuesday afternoon in late August, and Hynde wants to show off a massive Native American canoe that her hometown, Akron, Ohio, has preserved as a monument to its ancient history. Trouble is, she needs to walk—or in this supercharged rail-thin vegan's case, strut—across a busy expressway on-ramp to get to the grass island where the boat has been placed.

"Let 'em fuckin' kill me; I'm ready to go," she proclaims, leaping *Frogger*-style into a phalanx of confused motorists. "No one walks in America. When I walk around downtown at night, people think I'm a prostitute." +





**THE PRETENDERS** PUNK QUEEN HAS DESTROYED COP CARS, PARTIED WITH SEX PISTOLS AND HAS A THING FOR SADISTIC SKINNY BOYS. SO WHAT'S SHE DOING BACK HOME IN AKRON, OHIO, SLINGING VEGGIE BURGERS? • **BY JON DOLAN** • PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN SCHOELLER





## DEAR SUPERSTAR CHRISSIE HYNDE

Hynde, who's wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the phrase AKRON: WHERE THE WEAK ARE KILLED AND EATEN, has always lived a little dangerously. In 1973, she fled the Rubber City for London, where she worked as a rock critic, partied with the Sex Pistols, rehearsed with an embryonic version of the Clash and became BFFs with Iggy Pop, before founding the Pretenders in 1978. Her tough-but-sweet songs and androgynous look made her a pop star and a feminist icon (two designations she hates). And if the Pretenders' more recent roasty records aren't designed to register in the world of Coldplay and Kanye, it doesn't seem to worry Hynde. "I got into rock & roll because I was a fan," she says. "I never cared about celebrity."

These days, her artistic endeavor, almost rivaling her band, is Akron itself. She's become a civic booster for a hollowed-out post-industrial burg that's trying to rebound. She opened a vegan restaurant with a chic-for-Ohio modernist look, joined a campaign to save endangered local bus lines and hopes to turn the crummy movie theater into a thriving art house. Akron is all over the Pretenders' new album, *Break Up the Concrete*.

Driving around in her fuel-efficient Korean car, she pulls up in front of the rare house that isn't run-down or boarded up—porch freshly painted, flower beds lovingly tended. Chrissie Hynde wells up with pride like she's president of the Village Green Preservation Society: "Look! See what can happen if you care enough to do something?!"

► **Before you started the Pretenders, you worked as a music critic in England. What's the meanest thing you ever wrote?**

BEARDPOP, HUNTINGTON, NY I said that it sounded like Al Green was choking on a chicken bone at the end of "Let's Get Married." I must've had a problem with marriage at the time, because he's one of my all-time favorite singers. I'm ashamed to admit I wrote that. But you asked. Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies.

► **You grew up a rock chick in northern Ohio. What was a typical Friday night?**

NEMKIN, AKRON, OH Go to Cleveland to see a band. Maybe Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels would be playing at, like, a fun fair—Chippewa Lake Park Appreciation Day.

► **How did you feel about Rush Limbaugh using "My City Was Gone" as the theme song for his talk show?**

NJ3P, AMHERST, NY I've never heard his show, but the last time I checked, it was a free country and you were allowed to play what you wanted. I know a lot of people who think I've let this side down by not doing something about it. But that's their problem.

cities is the gay community. When all the families moved out, the gays didn't have families, and they're artistic—not to stereotype anybody. They restored the houses and made them beautiful. Now the families want to come back.

► **What's your objection to feminism?**

STONECOLDFOX.59, BECKLEY, WV I don't have an objection. I can't get with gender things. Some of my best friends are girls. It's not like I'm a guy's guy or a girl's girl. The thing about rock music was that it was very androgynous. When they started going to the gym and lifting weights and having big tits, to me that kind of killed the stuff I loved about rock. I like skinny little androgynous



The silk-screener really screwed up Hynde's Akron T-shirt.

► **You once appeared on *Friends*. Are you a Monica or a Rachel?**

BTHERE4U, RUTHERFORDTON, NC I dunno. When I did it I'd never heard of the show. It sounded like something to do—go to L.A. and hang out on the beach for a couple of days. It had much too high a profile for my taste. Though they were all very nice. They were like anyone else; they just had nicer haircuts.

► **After living in London, Paris and São Paulo, what's so great about Akron that lured you back there?**

66PETTIGREW, AUSTIN, TX The trees and birds. The climate during the autumn and the spring. There's a nice feeling of community, of people trying to move back into the center of town. The thing that saved American

longhaired boys who are kind of sadistic and butch girls—that androgyny is what turns me on.

► **I read somewhere that you almost became Mrs. Sid Vicious. How close did you come?**

NANCYGRRL, NEW HAVEN, CT He was gonna help me stay in England. He had to go to court for putting someone's eye out with a glass or something. And when we got to the courthouse, it was closed for an extended holiday and I had to think of something else. He was a mate. He was a kid. He did get quite violent when he was high. I guess everyone was drinking a lot of lager and taking speed. If you combine that with a chain under your jacket, that's usually a recipe for disaster in a crowded nightclub.





► I heard you were on campus during the Kent State shootings. Where were you, and what did you see?

CZECHBACK, LOS ANGELES

I was on my way to take my portfolio to one of the art buildings—well, a former art building, because we'd burned 'em down the night before—and I heard gunshots and people shouting and they were trying to carry everyone off. Someone shouted, "They killed someone," and I just sat down until the National Guard carried me out. It was a big fuck-up. I remember looking at the National Guardsmen—they were our age. Nobody really knew what was going on. Someone gave the wrong command.

▶ You've gotten arrested at PETA protests. Can you get a good vegan meal in jail?

IRIS45, OCEAN VIEW, DE

I haven't stayed long enough. I've been to jail a couple of times for animal-rights stuff, once for having a knife in my bag and once for kicking out a police-car window. But in my experience, no.

► You live in a swing state. Are you going to campaign for Obama?

JMAHER, OXFORD, MS

I'm a British citizen. To be honest, there's nothing I want to talk about less than politics. I'd rather vomit and lick it up. I like Obama, but he's not gonna win. Trust me, I know my people.

**▶ You worked at the Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood shop, SEX, in the punk days. What was the most popular item you sold?**

There wasn't really one. We sold rubber skirts. The SEX shop didn't cater to real perverts. It was people taking

(Clockwise from above): Hynde ("S"), Westwood ("E") and Co., scaring away customers at the SEX shop, 1976; Hynde's almost-husband Sid Vicious; hopefully wearing pleather with the Pretenders, 1979; being arrested after protesting at a GAP 2000.



the piss out of perverts. It wasn't about bondage—it was about social bondage, more of a metaphor. And then the next generation took it seriously and started using handcuffs. I think they're idiots.

► On the back of the first Pretenders record, there's a picture of you bending down to tuck in one of the guys' pant cuffs. Are you a motherly figure for the musicians you play with?

HABERDASHER3, BUTTE, MT

I wouldn't say I'm "motherly," but I'm a chick, so if I'm hanging out with 20 Hells Angels, I'll make the tea. But if I'm hanging out with my band, I'll get one of them to make the tea.

► I thought punks were supposed to hate hippies. How come you're such a big Hendrix fan?

LUCAMORE, FLORENCE, ITALY

I never thought of myself as a punk. I thought of myself as a hippie. The punks in England, like Sid, would say, "We could always go to my Mummy's and smoke hippie drugs," because his mom was more of that generation, so he considered pot a hippie drug. But I always liked the whole hippie ethic. And I've been kind of disappointed in

hippies. I didn't think they'd turn into a bunch of overweight meat eaters.

► What would it take to get you to don the waitress costume from the “Brass in Pocket” video and read customers the day’s specials at your restaurant?

CWS232, BROOKLYN, NY

I wore a waitress outfit on our opening day. I stepped off the back of a Harley-Davidson and served veggie burgers to the local cops. I've got the outfit, if you want to see it.

► Ray Davies, whom you dated in the '80s and had a kid with, called your relationship "a fairy-tale romance written by Alfred Hitchcock." Which Hitchcock movie did it most resemble?

BRIGGS4NOW, TEHACHAPI, CA  
*The Birds.*

► How did you come up with your look?

BRAKENBY, ST. PAUL, MN

We dressed the way we did on the street. Everything's become a fashion shoot, and that's not what I'm about. Though I love my clothes and my Stella McCartney boots. I wouldn't want to pretend I didn't. But I'm a Payless girl at heart.

**▶ You once recorded a cover of the Judds' "Love Can Build a Bridge" with Cher, Neneh Cherry and Eric Clapton, and a reggae version of "I Got You Babe" with the singer from UB40. Do you regret either of those decisions?**

GABELOL, SAN RAFAEL, CA

No. Not that chart positions are important, but I've only had three No. 1s, and you picked on two of 'em. So, fuck off! **B**



STATION TO STATION BY ROB SHEFFIELD

# THE ONLY BAND THAT MATTERS

RADIOHEAD, OF COURSE! A STADIUM BAND AND A CULT ACT ROLLED INTO ONE, THEY MAKE IT LOOK EASY. BUT IT'S NOT

**A**FTER 10 YEARS AS THE WORLD'S GREATEST Rock Band, and 10 years of complaining about it, Radiohead can do whatever they want, yet what they want more than anything else is to be Radiohead. As they rolled through the U.S. on their summer tour, song-and-dance men crushing crowd after crowd, their crazed enthusiasm and teamwork made all other rock bands seem decidedly failure-flavored. My iPod is stuffed with two hours' worth of "Idiotique" versions from this tour alone, but my favorite is the one I saw them play at Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, in August. Thom Yorke launched into his version of Prince's "Baby I'm a Star" dance, caressing his hair lustily to the robot beats. (My, that is one sexy ice age coming!) Ed O'Brien and Jonny Greenwood fiddled with guitars and beat boxes. Colin Greenwood just grinned a lot and kept clapping for the crowd. The drummer is bald. I saw a lot of great shows this summer, but only Sigur Rós come close to Radiohead for sheer joy.

Radiohead are on a historic roll and they know it, manhandling their classics because they're cocky enough to realize the new songs are even better.



Like the Grateful Dead, they assume their fans around the world are tuning in to every show, except now, thanks to YouTube and BitTorrent, fans listen to each show before the next one even begins. They're a stadium band operating like a cult act, free to amuse themselves however they please, except with an audience the size that comes with the World's Greatest title.

Usually a band that gets stuck with that crown has done their best work already, but Radiohead won it by acclamation when they were just warming up (like William Butler Yeats, the only writer in history who did his best work *after* winning the Nobel Prize). They aren't like Nirvana, who really hated the job, or the Clash, who got

dubbed "the only band that matters" and immediately fell apart under the strain. Living up to rock fans' romantic dreams on that scale is like being president—anyone who wants the gig is too crazy to pull it off, and anyone who gets it gets crushed by it. But these guys thrive on it.

It's funny, because people still talk about Radiohead in terms of the tortured-artist mystique they built for themselves years ago, even though it's been a minute since that image had much to do with their music. But the least interesting things about Radiohead are the ones that get the most attention, and that seems to be exactly the way they like it. When they released *In Rainbows* last fall, what had people talking was the Internet tip jar they set up. That's



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## Radiohead's Summer Jams

Crank up your iPod—the best of their 2008 tour



## ■ "Talk Show Host"

Atlanta, May 8

An old B-side from the immortal 1996 *Romeo & Juliet* soundtrack, although naturally everybody recognizes it from the opening chord. Thom Yorke snarls about guns and sandwiches over film noir guitars.

## ■ "The Rip"

St. Louis, May 14

Radiohead posted this clip on their Web site—it's just Thom and Jonny backstage, trying out an acoustic version of this paranoid gem from the latest *Portishead* album. Thom reads the lyrics from his laptop—while you watch him on yours. Metal!

## ■ "Super Collider"

Dublin, June 7

A yet-to-be recorded song introduced the previous night in Amsterdam: just Thom at the piano fantasizing about slipping through a wormhole. He tells the fans, "We're going to do it again, this time remembering what the words are. Maybe."

## ■ "Cymbal Rush"

Mansfield, MA, August 13

An easily overlooked ballad on Yorke's solo joint. His falsetto at the end takes off into some crowd-chilling terror—after this, the segue into "Karma Police" sounds downright cheery.

## ■ "Bangers and Mash"

Vancouver, August 19

This jagged up-tempo rocker unfortunately got relegated to the extras disc of *In Rainbows*, but it still sounds like one of the highlights.

## ■ "Tell Me Why"

Los Angeles, August 25

Thom and Jonny face off with acoustic guitars at a Hollywood Bowl show Webcast to fans worldwide—a melancholic ditty from Neil Young's Topanga Canyon hippie days, no doubt inspired by all the California sunshine.

understandable, because the release-day excitement was part of the immediate fun of the album. But it was also a smokescreen—after all, circulating your music for free to build brand buzz has been standard hip-hop practice for years now. Lil Wayne has given away more free albums than Radiohead have

eaten hot breakfasts. Yet Radiohead seem to like having a smokescreen—it gives them the space they need to make music as intense, personal and emotionally turbulent as *In Rainbows*. They can bare their souls safe in the knowledge that everyone is busy talking about their distribution plan.

It's fun in a perverse way to play the compilation their former record company released this summer, *The Best of Radiohead*, which nobody gave a toss about. Radiohead had nothing to do with the collection, which I guess makes it a more authentic portrait of dystopian alienation than any of their other records. A two-CD set culled mostly from their '90s albums, priced at a hilarious \$24.98, it's a possible future of music as envisioned 10 years ago, one of the many '90s futures that slipped away from us. As a mutant consumer object destined to be loved by nobody, it has a real poignancy, especially since the songs are (after all) great. It's just another weird way the Radiohead musical virus keeps spreading and mutating, like the moment on *Girl Talk*'s instant mixology classic *Feed the Animals* (released via the kind of free download that Radiohead made headline-worthy) when the DJ spins Jay-Z's "Roc Boys" rap over the sped-up guitar lick from "Paranoid Android," as if these two '90s vets naturally belonged together. Damn, it feels good to be an android!

Like their guru Neil Young (they covered "Tell Me Why" at the Hollywood Bowl gigs), these boys are masters at making every move seem like a bold break with their past, even when

they still sound kinda the same. Each time they make an album, they repudiate their previous one, telling horror stories about how they agonized in the studio and almost broke up. Yet it usually sounds like a Radiohead record. Since *Kid A*, they've made three great let's-twist-again rock albums with verse-chorus-verse songs—four if you count Yorke's solo *The Eraser*. Yet people keep raving (or complaining) about how difficult, experimental and abstract they are. You have to admit, that is one brilliant scam.

After all these years, Radiohead remain mystery men. Nobody really understands the bond between the five musicians, most of whom have known one another since they were kids. It's like the equally mysterious tie between Missy Elliott and Timbaland, the closest thing America has to a Radiohead. They both came from a town far off the music-biz map—Oxfordshire, for Radiohead; Virginia Beach, for Missy and Tim—with a collaborative mojo they had no interest in explaining to outsiders. They blew up in the anything-goes 1990s, yet got even bigger in the everything-must-go 2000s, convincing their fans to come along for supa-dupa-fly experiments while their peers went down in flames playing it safe.

Radiohead became so beloved in the late '90s because they tried way too hard, aspiring to the high ground abandoned by their heroes—Nirvana, Pearl Jam, U2, R.E.M., the Beasties. Result? *Kid A*, still the defining moment in the Radiohead legend, and the pinnacle of their trying-too-hard genius. It looms over everything else they've done; in fact, it's safe to say that *OK Computer* and *The Bends* remain famous chiefly because they were made by the band that went on to make *Kid A*. The music had the same painfully gauche effect as Conor Oberst's voice, so forlorn and hammy, trying so hard to display sensitivity that you felt vaguely humiliated. Yet I ended up loving *Kid A*, and loving Conor Oberst, too. Gauche is

beautiful, especially in a world of dime-a-dozen cool.

That gauche appeal sets Radiohead apart—they still try too hard, even as their music gets looser, wigglier and just plain better. Whatever it is that keeps them together is probably also what keeps them the World's Greatest, and it probably isn't their ideas (brilliant ideas, though! Brilliant!) so much as their humane warmth and enthusiasm. (Also, their drummer is insane.) Watching them live in 2008, locking into their onstage hustle as gleefully as showbiz lifers like Willie Nelson or George Clinton, it's hard to believe any band could have this much fun—so much shared history to celebrate, and so much energy to celebrate it with. This is really happening, and they really like it. **B**



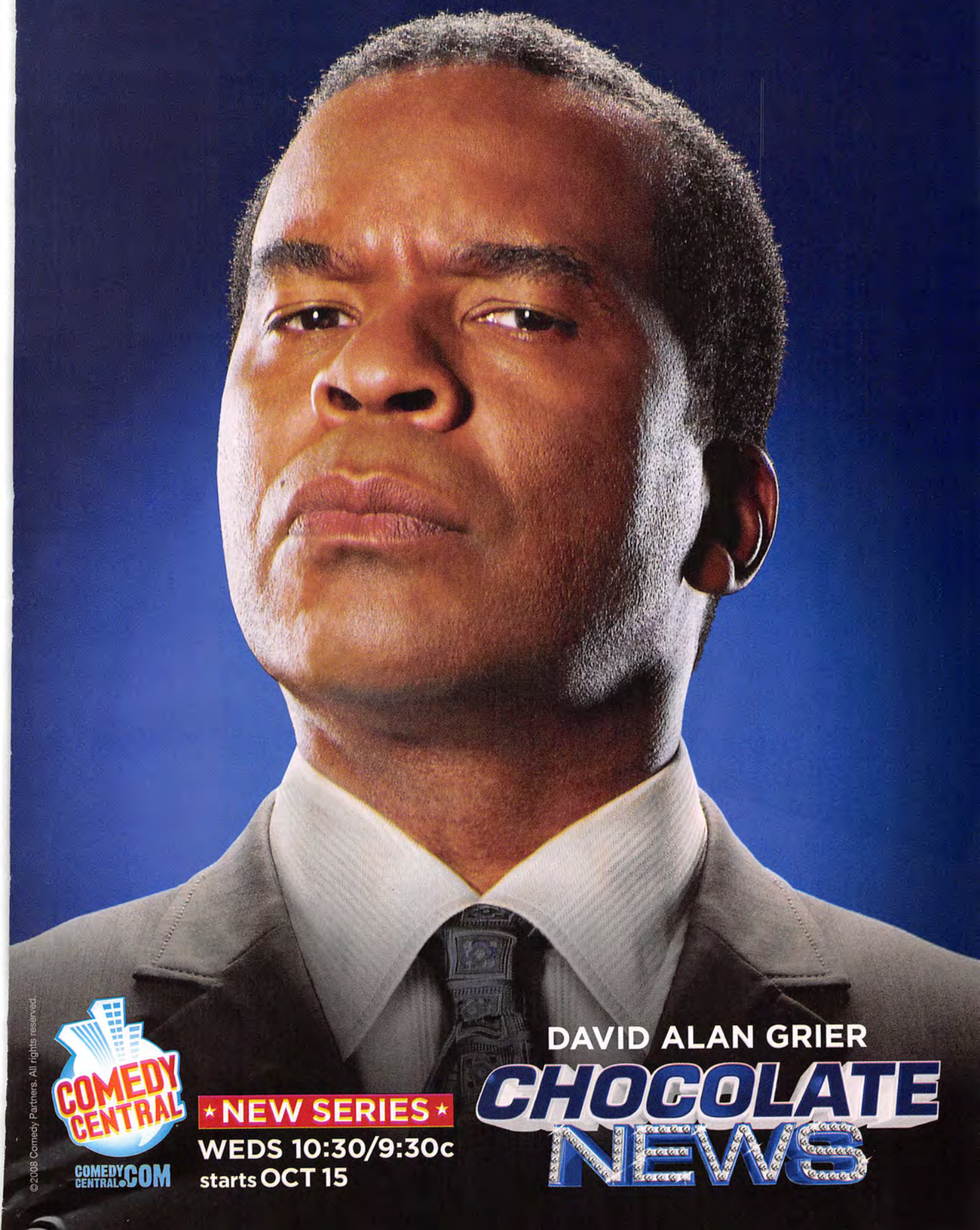
## TOYS FROM KURT'S ATTIC

Not so much a coffee-table book as a portable museum, *Cobain Unseen* is an "interactive biography" cum scrapbook that tries to create the sensation of going through a rock star's attic and sorting out boxes of random junk, looking for clues. It has physical reproductions galore, designed to be pulled out and held in your hands: a piece of notebook paper with the scrawled lyrics to "Smells Like Teen Spirit," fliers for early Nirvana shows, childhood watercolors, a Certificate of Participation from a local high-school art show from 1985.

The impact of *Unseen* is strangely similar to Nirvana's *Unplugged*, Cobain's own attempt to tell his story through a collection of artifacts. Cobain was compulsively confessional, but he always gave his audience the sense he was holding something back, if only because he hadn't yet figured it out himself. *Unseen* may or may not be an accurate picture of Cobain—but it's definitely a picture of his fans.



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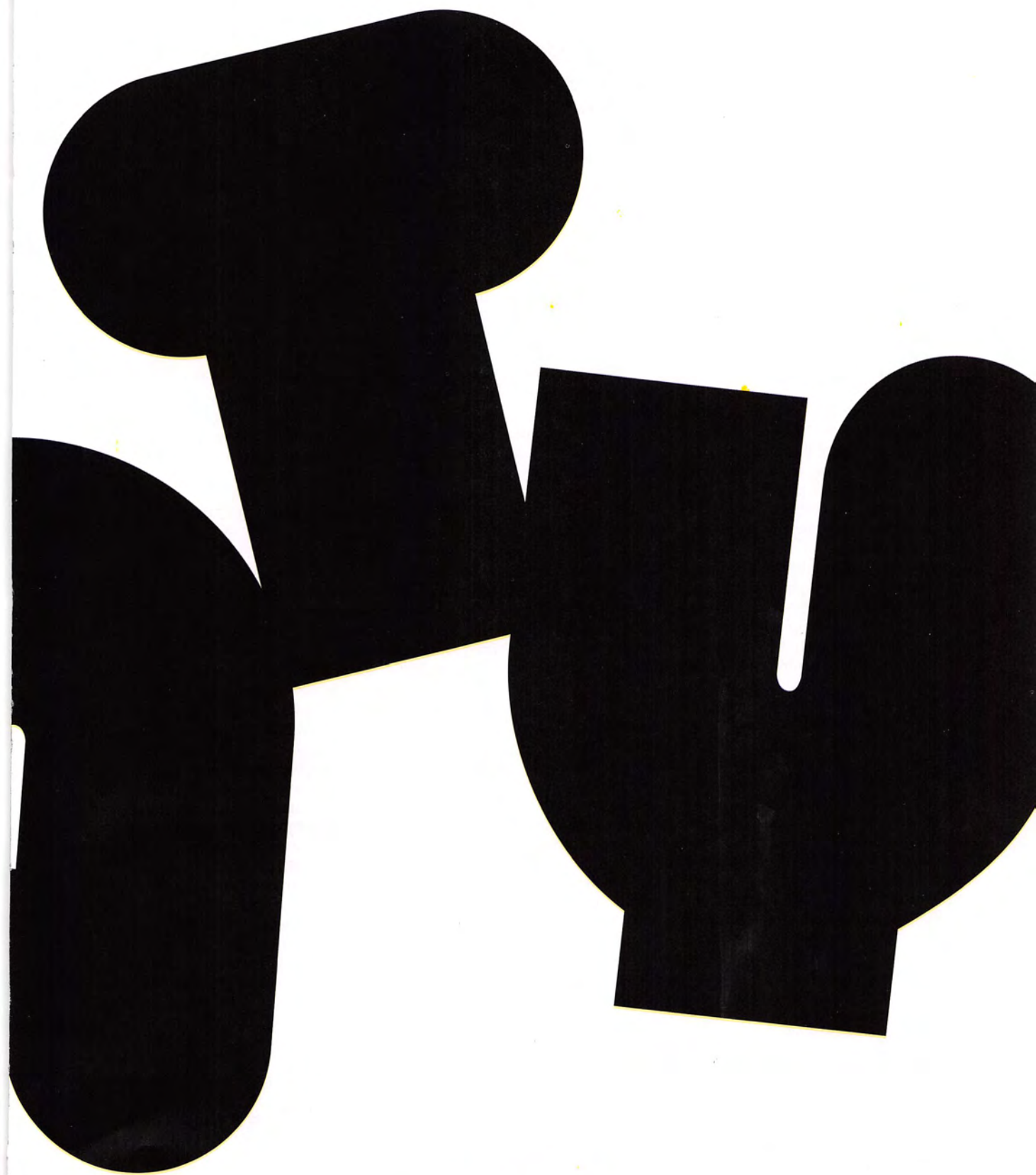


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BY ROB SHEFFIELD PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN WATTS



# GIRL ON GIRL

**KATY PERRY**—THE BREAKTHROUGH STAR OF '08—

EXPLAINS HOW A CHILDHOOD FULL OF GOD AND BOOZE

CREATED A POP PROVOCATEUR WHO LOVES

HOT PANTS AND PORNOGRAPHIC ORIGAMI

EVEN IN THE PARKING LOT OF A SIX FLAGS IN NEW JERSEY, glamour never sleeps. Katy Perry is here today to rock the theme-park crowd as part of an MTV package tour. The boys in her band pile out of the bus one by one, in the usual rock-band way: rubbing their eyes, shaking their heads at the sun, staggering to their trailer. Katy Perry is on the bus, too, because, as her album title puts it, she is *One of the Boys*. However, there is one way in which she is not much like one of the boys: She does not want anyone to see her without makeup. To ensure this, she walks the hundred yards from the tour bus to the dressing room with her hands over her face, clutching a pink Victoria's Secret bag.

Is she wearing heels? It's a Six Flags parking lot. In New Jersey. On a Wednesday afternoon. Of course, she's wearing heels.

Katy Perry likes makeup, likes clothes, likes having everyone's attention. The stylists hunch over her, working on her eyelashes, her hair, her skin. It takes two hours. Perry sings an assortment of Queen songs to herself in the chair. Even when she's supposed to be resting her voice, she is what your grandmother might call a "loudmouth"; it's one of the reasons she's delightful company.

A stylist mentions that she's big news on the AOL home page today. Katy's preacher mom was quoted in a U.K. tabloid calling her daughter's music "disgusting." Perry, whose mom came to three of her shows in California last week, dismisses the story as a lie. "Fine," she says in exasperation. "I'll just stop singing, if that makes everybody happy. Let the gangstas keep talking about raping and ganging and banging and let them have the airwaves. I'll go away and never sing again, and then there will be world peace."

She interrupts her own rant to check herself out in the mirror. She smiles: "Two degrees from a drag queen!"

Perry has always loved big displays of sequins and color. When she was a teenager, she would sneak into Universal Studios in Los Angeles, posing as a stylist. "I'd try on all the clothes, all these vintage gowns, and hope nobody would bust me," she says rapid-fire, which is her usual pace. "I was a glamour ninja."

These days, she's the 23-year-old pop starlet behind "I Kissed a Girl," the song that spent most of the summer at No. 1. She grew up born-again in Santa Barbara, California, with two pastors for parents. She began her musical career as Katy Hudson (her original surname) when she was just 17. Her first album, in 2001, had a song called "Growing Pains": "I'm grateful to be part of the family tree/While the Man upstairs does his work on me." *One of the Boys* is most famous for a song that goes, "I kissed a girl/And I liked it." Sunrise, sunset.

Perry traveled this summer on the Warped Tour and was queen bee of a festival full of sweaty rock dudes, eating Kraft Easy Mac for dinner every day on the bus. Her boyfriend, Travis McCoy of Gym Class Heroes, was also on the Warped Tour and would often carry her onstage for her set; she

claims proudly, "I was voted 'laziest' by everybody on the tour." She wore a different outfit for every show, which defines the term *thankless task*. "When you see a YouTube clip, you can date the show by what I'm wearing," she notes. "Like a real-life calendar girl!"

Along the way, she topped the singles charts, so there's no time to rest now. It's back on the road for another tour, in the dog-day afternoon heat. Yesterday, in Maryland, her Candies melted onto her feet while she was singing. You get the idea that the daily ordeal in the makeup chair is, perhaps, the best part of the day.

**HOW DO PEOPLE HATE KATY PERRY? LET US COUNT THE WAYS.**

"I Kissed a Girl" has been called homophobic, misogynistic, pornographic and "lesboploitation." Also bombastic, repetitive to the point of torture, and a sexual tourist's voyeuristic slide show. Perry has been compared to "Girls Gone Wild" (*she's just making out with a girl to get male attention*), Tila Tequila (*she's pretending to be bisexual when she really isn't*) and Pat Benatar (*those high notes*).

Jill Sobule had a hit called "I Kissed a Girl" in 1995, about two straight girls making out for kicks and giggles; it had acoustic guitars and a coy wink. Perry's song is the opposite: loud, crass and obnoxious, which is what's so excellent about it. That *clomp-clomp* beat comes straight from the homo-curious tradition of 1970s glam rock like Slade's "Cum on Feel the Noize" and the Sweet's "Blockbuster," as beefy British lads put on makeup and celebrated gender confusion as a way to impress girls and pay for the lagers.

Everybody is used to hearing male stars leer as the ladies swap spit—Ray-L had an R&B hit last year called "My Girl Gotta Girlfriend," which nobody bothered to hate. If you're Mötley Crüe, you can get on the radio singing about this kind of thing (remember "Same Ol' Situation?"); the same goes for Jay-Z ("Get a couple chicks, get 'em to try to do E/ Hopefully they'll ménage before I reach my garage"). But since Perry is a girl, her song gets impressively hostile reactions.

Perry seems surprised anybody would take it as a gay-unfriendly song. "It's about not being gay," she says. "It's just a song about curiosity." For the record, yes, she's kissed a girl—but, no, this song isn't really autobiographical. "It's a song about how I felt, not about anything I did or didn't do." When she performs the song live, she does a bit where she pretends to get a call from her mom: "Mom? I can't really talk right now. I'm onstage. Yeah ... it's true. I kissed a girl. But that's all—it's not like I felt her boob. But I wanted to!"

**AS PART OF HER DAILY PROMO WHIRL, PERRY MEETS A** throng of fans backstage, contest winners from a New York radio station. One of her assistants takes the camera to snap a fan photo and says, "Smile like you're friends." Perry, her arm still around the girls, speaks without letting her big smile slip. "We are friends, fuck-tard!" *Flash!* ✦

STYLING: NATALIE SAPHIER FOR PHOTOGENICS BEAUTY AT SMASHBOX; HAIR: AARON LIGHT FOR CELESTINE AGENCY; MAKEUP: ERIN SMITH FOR CELESTINE AGENCY; PROOF STYLING: JASMINE HAMER; PRODUCTION: FIRST SHOT PRODUCTIONS; PREVIOUS SPREAD: VINTAGE BATHING SUIT: UNIVERSAL COSTUME; HEADBAND: CASPARD YURKIEWICH; SHOES AND BRACELETS: OGAMI VINTAGE, L.A.; SOCKS: TABIO, LONDON







The fans are mostly very young girls with their parents. Two of them, 12 or 13 years old with braces, wear matching homemade T-shirts with the Sharpie'd words **I KISSED A GIRL AND I LIKED IT**. Both girls have crossed out **LIKE** and written **LOVED!** This is kind of weird.

Eventually, one of the music-bizzers hanging around says the Wrong Thing: "Has anybody ever told you that you look like Zoëy Deschanel?" Shockingly, Perry *has* heard this before. ("Only every fucking day of my life!" she mutters when the person's back is turned.) Hoping to change the mood, somebody observes that she must be an Elizabeth Taylor fan. "Big Liz Taylor fan," Perry says. "Whenever I look in the mirror, I say, *Give me more early Liz Taylor. More Cleopatra, please!*"

One of her all-time fashion icons is Apollonia, from the Prince movie *Purple Rain*. "Prince always picked out the hottest ladies. I guess because he was a hot lady himself," she says. But her favorite movie stars are the old-school Hollywood queens: "Jane Russell is the one I really copy."

Perry's thrift-store-bombshell style is a big part of her appeal—this is definitely one pop star you wouldn't get confused with the girls from *The Hills*. "Hellz to the fuck no!" she says, aghast. "There's no comparison. No offense, but those ladies are a totally different breed. A cheeseburger's fine if you're just looking for something quick to fill you up, but there's no substitute for the filet!"

**PERRY HAS A JESUS TATTOO ON HER LEFT WRIST SHE GOT** when she was 18. "I see it every time I'm playing guitar," she says. "It's looking back up at me. That's where I come from, and probably where I'm going back to."

She grew up with an older sister and younger brother in her parents' ministry—"Evangelical, with a heavy Pentecostal flavor"—in a world of Christian school, Christian camp and church several times a week. "It was kind of an island," she remembers. "We spoke in tongues. We knew there was this one way, and all the other ways were wrong." In Perry's house, deviled eggs were called angedel eggs. "I didn't know enough to ask my mom, 'How come we call them that?' Everybody else calls them something else."

What she also didn't know was that her parents hadn't always been on the side of the angels. Both her mom and dad had their own rock & roll days, before they were born again. As Perry says proudly, "In terms of wild youth, they put me to shame." Her mom grew up a debutante in Southern California, then ran off to see the world, with a tempestuous first marriage in Zimbabwe. She also briefly dated Jimi Hendrix in Spain. "He just came up to her in a club and picked her out." Her dad was a West Coast scenester in the '60s. "He was like a male Penny Lane," Perry says, referring to the *Almost Famous* role that made a star out of another girl named Kate Hudson. He was an acid dealer who palled around with Timothy Leary and specialized in a potent strain of LSD called Strawberry Fields.

When Perry hit her teens, she began going out drinking. That's when she found out about her parents' wild hippie days. "I started spending Sunday mornings crying and hung

over," she says. "Because crying is what you *do* when you're hung over. So my dad started telling me about when he was my age." His testimony—the story of his past and his conversion—offered an example of how she could put her life right. She's protective of her parents' beliefs, even if she doesn't share them anymore: "They found God at a time when they really needed to, and I believe in the God they found. My dad would have died from one tab of Strawberry Fields too many if he hadn't found God."

She began her music career as part of her parents' ministry. Things have taken a different turn, and she has jumbled feelings about that. "It's so easy to know everything when you're a kid," she says. "God, I miss that. Then you start to wonder, *Dudeface is going to hell because he grew up in a family just like mine, except in another country and Muslim?*" She doesn't know everything anymore. "There's a lot of question marks in my life. This is a universe I can't control, and I'm a control freak."

As for tabloid reports of parental disgust, she gives the time-honored one-word response: "Momm!" She gnashes her teeth in mock mortification. "I can't believe you fell for that tabloid reporter. Those are the people you warned me about, the devil in sheep's clothing!" She insists the quotes were "exaggerated" but adds it's a

conversation she and her mother have had for a long time: "Mom said the same thing she's *always* saying about me, which is the same thing I'm always saying about her. We're different, but we love each other." Despite any religious conflicts, she's part of the family tree. "I'm still in the will," she explains. "It's just that I have more money than them now."

**"SOMEBODY'S WATCHING** us." Perry glances over. It's

the following night in Manhattan, and sure enough, across the fancy restaurant, she has spotted a couple members of her entourage keeping an eye on her to make sure she doesn't do anything, you know, crazy. "Check this out," she says. She takes her cloth napkin, folds it a few times, and—voila!—it's a penis. Perry waves it proudly in the air, as her handlers cradle their aching heads in their hands.

Then she puts the napkin back in her lap. "Origami," she says. "The Japanese art of dirty napkin folding. Perfect for any dining occasion."

Perry's earliest trips to Manhattan were to visit her uncle Frank, the director of *Mommie Dearest*. "We would go to my uncle's apartment and see the drag queens in his neighborhood," she says. "That's New York to me." *Mommie Dearest* is the 1981 biopic where Faye Dunaway plays the old-school Hollywood star Joan Crawford as a total rage-aholic. Perry has the whole thing memorized, naturally, and does a convincingly scary impression of Crawford having one of her tantrums. ("No wire hangers!") But her all-time favorite movie is the drag-queen documentary *Paris Is Burning*. "If I wasn't a straight little girl from Santa



Hot mama (from top): With her mother, Mary; bunny hopping at the Warped Tour; on the steamiest camping trip ever; with Gym Class beau Travis McCoy.





Barbara, California, I'd be a drag queen in New York," she says. "Them bitches are aggressive."

At the same time, she grew up an avid skater. "As soon as Santa Barbara got a skate park, I was there after school every day," she remembers. "I can still do the half-pipe—in heels." She remains a weird mix of tomboy and girlie-girl—somebody who sings about how she wants to be "one of the boys" but also wants to be the most frou-frou princess in the room. She's fascinated by drag and retro gay/glamour icons, playing up her va-va-voom role whether she's on the Warped Tour or going down the VMA red carpet with Miley Cyrus. Something about her goes for the idea of femininity as a disguise. "I was always into dressing up, even when I was a little girl," she says. "My mom says I would wear a different outfit for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It was my way of saying I wanted to *arrive*."

Working away on her steak, she folds her napkin into a pair of breasts.

#### PERRY HAS BEEN IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS A LONG TIME.

She's been signed and dropped more than most musicians her age have shampooed. Ever since her born-again album flopped, when she was only 17, she's been making demos, writing songs, meeting producers. She's used to rejection. "You gotta have alligator skin," she says. Still, no hard feelings!

"Sometimes I want to call [former CEO of her first label] Lyor Cohen and say, 'Hi! I'm calling from my suite at the Ritz-Carlton and waiting for room service! I'm a star now. Thanks for dropping me! *Click!*'"

She got picked up and axed by Island Def Jam, and then by Columbia just a couple of years ago. Perry says, "They dropped me, OneRepublic and Jonas Brothers, in a matter of weeks. But what do you expect? Old guys in suits—they weren't the ones who were going out to the clubs or coming to the shows." "Nobody at those labels got what she was about," says Alanis Morissette producer Glen Ballard, who spent three years working with Perry. "She had talent, personality, humor, a sense of fashion. They didn't know what to do with it."

Along the way, she had some disillusioning experiences. "The first time I got signed, they brought me in a room with three other girls they signed at the same time," she says. "They sat us down and said, 'Maybe *one* of you will ever make a record. One of you will actually take a swing. The other three can go back to middle America and pop out babies.'"

Despite her long wait, she didn't quit: "What else was I gonna do? I'd just turn into a depressed, pill-popping disaster of a housewife." She decided to stick it out until she turned 25, but it only took until she was 23. "It was really difficult," she admits. "Drinking became a problem. It got out of control, until I said, *OK—back to work*. I know I'm speaking for someone, even if it's someone silly." The U.K. model for this kind of pop star has been trash-talking messes like Amy Winehouse and Lily Allen, who Perry adores, but so far there hasn't been a homegrown version. "Lily Allen doesn't want to be an American pop star. I do," Perry says. "There was a void for a girl who had some sass. I knew that girl was me."

**WHILE PERRY SINGS "I KISSED A GIRL" AT SIX FLAGS, HER** boyfriend watches from the side of the stage, nodding his head. McCoy toured with Perry all summer, so he's heard her sing this song many times. "He's thug-nificent," Perry says. "I can't believe I got a thug to commit!" She wears a promise ring that McCoy gave her. "He's a big ladies' man, so I guess he wanted to put his stamp on me. It's like, *Fine, please just don't brand me with your iron, OK?*"

They've known each other for a few years now. "We weren't really together," she says. "It was casual. But soulless hooking up didn't seem so hot to me. I always wanted to have a romance. I said, 'Excuse me, I've been coming to a number of your shows in the greater Los Angeles area for quite some time now. I've been your Penny Lane long enough, and now I want to be your Grace Kelly.'"

"She's opulent," McCoy says, using one of Perry's favorite words. "I was smitten as soon as she walked in the room—she's a girl who demands attention. I have no game whatsoever, so I decided, *I'm just gonna ignore the shit out of her*. In essence, that worked."

She's always been attracted to artistic types—difficult personalities. "It takes one to know one," she admits. "I'm not difficult, though. I'm complicated." She pauses and takes in the reaction this last statement provokes. "OK, so I'm

difficult. The closest I ever came to normal was dating a golfer." Perry says she and McCoy have no big plans for the future: "We don't know what's in the cards. But we're holding the cards, and we're gonna play 'em."

Her mom and dad hung out with McCoy on the Warped Tour, where they discovered that he's also a tattoo artist. "So now my dad wants to get a tattoo from him," Perry says. "Dad's got three tattoos already. They all say JESUS."



Cutting down on her carbon footprint—sexily!

#### A WEEK LATER, PERRY IS BACK IN

New York and eager to go play with puppies. She's homesick for her cat, Kitty Purry, so she wants to hit some pet stores, just to cuddle the merchandise. We meet up at Le Petit Puppy on Christopher Street in the West Village, the most famously gay street in the world, yet even here she manages to stick out. Who

the hell wears blue hot pants and a lacey bustier to go to a pet store? This girl does. She picks up a Maltese puppy, the whitest, fluffiest dog in the place, and gives him a great big kiss. Naturally, she leaves lipstick smudges on him.

At the next shop we hit, she leaves more smooches on Pomeranians and Boston terriers. One of them tries to kiss her back, maybe a little too passionately. "Aaargh!" Perry yells. "Please don't eat my fake hair!"

She sits in the window to play with a cat, dangling a piece of string. The cat, unlike the passers-by in the window, ignores her. "Just like a girl," Perry muses. "They never give attention back." Yet this girl obviously has somebody's attention now. "I know, right?" she says. "I was the middle child, always looking for attention. And now ..." She takes a deep breath. "Be careful what you wish for! It's like wishing for boobs. The universe says, *OK, you want this? Here it comes, bitch!*" ☼







# PAIN'S WORLD

WEARING  
a TOP HAT AND  
GROOMING LIKE AN  
R&B CYBORG,  
T-PAIN TURNED HIS  
LOVE OF STRIPPERS  
INTO POP-CHART  
DOMINANCE.

NOW IF ONLY HE  
COULD GET HIS WIFE  
TO GO TO BED WITH  
HIM

BY JONAH  
WEINER  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
RENNIO  
MALFREDI



# It's a Little Past

5 P.M. on an August Thursday, rush hour is tightening its throttlehold on Manhattan, and T-Pain, crossing Midtown in a black Escalade, is just starting his workday. But after about 16 minutes, he slumps down into his bucket seat, splays his powder blue New Balances and decides he's had enough.

"Fuuuuck this."

This morning, he flew in from Atlanta, where he partied late the night before, and conked out. In the afternoon, a handler hustled him out of his hotel suite to videotape a quick endorsement for a clothing line. From there, he climbed into the SUV, which now crawls toward the Sirius Satellite Radio studios. T-Pain is slated to spend an hour there taping interviews.

"Come on," says Dave Abrams, his burly manager, from the seat next to him. "This is fun!"

T-Pain pulls out an iPhone ringed with crystals and starts playing with apps. His new album, *Thr33 Ringz*—full of space-age R&B heavy on the digitally processed Wall-E warble that has become his trademark—is circus-themed, and if part of the point is that the music industry is a Big Tent, today marks the start of the hoop-jumping routine every pop star must perform in the almighty name of album promotion. "This ain't fun, man," T-Pain says. "This is work."

He doesn't say the last word so much as gag on it.

*Weurghk.* To T-Pain, 23, *work* means a job, and that's what he got into music to avoid. "Out of 31 days in a month, I'm at the strip club 15," he says. That's the one part of work he loves: research. A multi-platinum R&B star who dabbles in rapping and producing, he's proud to say that he's been employed exactly once, when he was 18. "I used to cook seafood and sell it out of a truck with my dad," he recalls. "That's one of the worst jobs ever. I would stink for weeks! Can you imagine trying to talk to girls smelling like raw fish?"

He drags from a Black & Mild cigar—his favorite brand—rolls down the window and hocks a loogie. It almost connects with a delivery man pedaling alongside us. "Of course, when it came to girls," T-Pain adds, "it didn't hurt that I have a gigantic penis!" He erupts into a two-part laugh: an opening salvo, arcing and guttural, followed by three staccato cackles: *Huuuaaaagh! Hanh! Hanh! Hanh!*

This is how T-Pain makes work tolerable: He goofs off, amusing himself with little off-color rebellions. At Sirius, while one DJ is interviewing him, T-Pain starts appending the word *ho's* to every third sentence, Tourette-style. As in: "I just shot the video for my first single. Ho's." Or: "Yeah, I worked with Kanye, Luda and my man Weezy. Ho's." In hip-hop gossip circles, fans often speculate that he has lied about his age, that he must be older than 23. Right now, that number seems about 10 years too high.

DJs shuffle out; other DJs shuffle in. After T-Pain finishes recording a dozen personalized station IDs ("It's your boy

T-Peezy, keepin' it locked to Sirius Hot Jamz 50!"), he promises to send the station programmer a copy of his second single within a few days.

"Barry's gonna be pissed," says Abrams, leaning against the studio wall. Barry is Barry Weiss, T-Pain's label boss, and he's gonna be pissed, apparently, because that single is not supposed to hit radio for several weeks.

T-Pain decides to goof off some more: "That Jew," he mutters, shaking his head. "I'm surrounded by Jews."

Nervous laughter crisscrosses the room. Abrams beams like a Miss America contestant with fire ants in her swimsuit: His frame stiffens; his face twists into an anguished smile. A few minutes later, he approaches me and says, "Pain's a funny guy, isn't he? Yeah. He likes to joke around. So, you gotta understand, he doesn't mean anything against Jews. Ha! I'm Jewish. My partner's Jewish."

T-Pain smiles, enjoying the sight of his manager running damage control. "It's why I only ever had one job," T-Pain says later on. "I got a real problem with authority."

**T-PAIN'S REAL NAME IS FAHEEM NAJM; HE WAS BORN TO** Muslim parents in Tallahassee, Florida. ("I don't really agree with religion," he notes. "It's just another form of separation.") He inherited his authority issues from his father, Shaheed Najm, a retired electric-company employee. A onetime '60s radical, the elder Najm "was real into, like, Black Panther shit," T-Pain says. "He was always cussin' out the police."

T-Pain was the middle child, with two brothers and two sisters. In his late teens, with the money he scrounged hawking seafood, he invested in recording equipment and started writing hard-edged raps as part of the group Nappy Headz, who enjoyed glancing local success. His breakthrough moment—memorialized in the title of his 2005 solo debut, *Rappa Ternt Sanga*—came when he put rapping on hold and sang a parody version of Akon's "Locked Up" from the perspective of a broke, no-car-havin'-ass scrub, titling the song "Fucked Up." DJs took to the track, Akon heard it and by the time T-Pain was 19, he had signed to the Senegalese singer's Konvict Muzik label.

T-Pain's masterstroke was to never lose sight of the loser who'd bitched about his bad credit on "Fucked Up." "I make music for the average person," he says. "Take this mix tape I just made. When we finished, we listened to it in a Honda Civic. Most artists, they're going to go in their SUV filled with speakers. But the people you're selling to aren't gonna have no SUV filled with speakers!"

In his songs, T-Pain inhabits an unlikely role: He's an R&B schlub. No chiseled, Usher-like Adonis here, no baby-face, Chris Brown-like plaything. T-Pain is pudgy, and he wears sunglasses out of insecurity—thanks to a car that struck him in third grade, his left eye droops slightly. Schlubitude animates his biggest hits, from "I'm N Luv (Wit a Stripper)" to "Bartender," where he favors the point of view of a pitiable/lovable guy who can't crack the VIP section, whose best prospects in a nightclub are the women paid to be there. "Out of the 200 dudes in any club," T-Pain says, "only six are macks. I talk to the other 194!"

"He's real average," Akon says. "Like, I'm getting him into



Moonlighting as the world's crunkest hansom cabbie.



Lamborghinis, but he'd rather buy Mini Coopers, Smart cars, Scions—it's funny!"

Taken in this light, T-Pain's sonic signature—his cyborgish singing, which he achieves via drastic manipulation of the pitch-correction software Auto-Tune—is a prosthetic, granting him an edge he wasn't born with: T-Pain puts on Auto-Tune the way a short guy puts on platform shoes. "I wanted to sound different," he says. "Auto-Tune was my way of being André 3000."

In the process, he's turned Snoop Dogg, 50 Cent, Lil Wayne and Kanye West into Auto-Tune junkies too: "At first, I was real pissed about them using the effect," he says. "Like, *You guys don't need this—I do!*" More aligned with the T-Pain spirit are the thousands of Auto-Tune-wielding bedroom amateurs who mine a million-dollar sound on the cheap. "There's been a whopping uptick in sales since T-Pain became really popular," says Marco Alpert, VP of marketing at Antares, the tiny Northern California company that makes Auto-Tune. (He adds that deep discounts on the last version of the program and buzz surrounding a brand-new edition aided the boost, too.) "Musicians used to be reluctant to say they used pitch correction. Today, it's open season."

Of course, even if T-Pain stays in touch with his pre-fame self, he isn't that guy anymore. He's now rich enough to indulge his wildest eccentricities: He orders custom top hats from a London haberdashery ("I got about 300 of 'em now"). He just bought a '70s-era hearse, painted it Miami Dolphins orange and is installing a sound system worth tens of thousands of dollars ... inside a coffin. "There'll be a skeleton under Plexiglas, too," he says. "That's gonna be my L.A. car."

Still, for all the money he's made, he says it can be difficult navigating between the guy who sold garlic crabs and the R&B superstar he's becoming. He's at that stage in his career where the veil of celebrity has yet to fully descend. He was amazed, and relieved, when he met Ludacris and discovered that they could communicate, like everyday dudes do, in movie dialogue. "We were quoting back and forth from *Walk Hard*," T-Pain recalls. "I was like, *You've seen that, too?*" He's amused, and miffed, when a tourist family spots him on the sidewalk and asks his bodyguard, "Is that T-Pain?" He climbs into his SUV, pulls the door closed and tosses up his palms. "Who the fuck do you think it is?" he asks. "Is there another motherfucker out here with a lime-green top hat?"

Some of the changes are grimmer. His wealth, he says, is driving a wedge between him and his family. At the start, he was managed by his father—an arrangement that ended after T-Pain signed to Akon's label. "Now my dad asks for money every time I talk to him, and that's just weird. He and I used to get along fantastic—until all the dollar signs." This is an element of success T-Pain hates more than work, because he can't goof it away. His parents split up when he was 18, right when his career began in earnest: "I felt it was my fault, because it was about shit that happened on the road."

"My whole family, man, they see what they see and they automatically ask for stuff," he continues. "It ain't a problem except when they ask for shit they don't need. I bought my mom a house and a Porsche truck. I bought my sister a Buick truck. I gave my dad \$20,000. I didn't even feel that one. But he asked for more, like, two days later. It got to the point where he straight up said, 'Gimme \$250,000 and you don't have to worry about me no more.' Like, what the fuck? That's a payoff for your dad. God damn."

**MANY RAP HORN-DOGS TALK ABOUT THE INSPIRATION THEY** get out of strip clubs. When he was 15, T-Pain got a life-changing experience. "In Tallahassee, dudes would hire girls at their house and charge admission," he recalls. "I remember fucking one girl on a couch in the living room, in

## PAINFUL TRANSFORMATION

CHANNELING T-PAIN, BLENDER ASSOCIATE EDITOR MARK YARM RECORDS A ROBO-JAM CELEBRATING CHEAPNESS

AS RANDY JACKSON MIGHT PUT IT, my singing is a little pitchy. OK, that's an understatement: When I say my singing is "ill," I actually mean it spreads disease. But thanks to Auto-Tune, T-Pain's pitch-correction software of choice, even a less-than-no-talent like me can transform into a freaky robo-voiced R&B sensation. World, meet T-Yarm.

Keeping in mind T-Pain's empathy for the common dude, I decide my soon-to-be hit should address our \$4-a-gallon economic reality—sexily. A team of fellow Blender editors helps me craft a seductive jam about the budget-conscious vacation (a.k.a. the staycation). Sample lyric: "We don't need to go to Tucson/We could hang out on my futon." Awww, yeah, you know what I'm talkin' 'bout, baby.

Next stop: the studio. To get deeper into the mindset, I don a top hat, copious bling and cheap grills. The disguise bolsters my confidence, as does the Patrón Silver I gulp beforehand. I feel at home, like T-Pain in the Cheetah Lounge VIP.

Six takes later, I've nailed it ... sort of. Now it's up to my bemused producer, Will Johnson, to digitally fix my "rhythmic trouble" and "God awful" singing. The end result is two minutes and 37 seconds of exquisite warbling. Screw you, Randy—I'm going to Hollywood, dawg!

HEAR "STAYCATION (GIRL)" AND WATCH A MAKING-OF VIDEO AT [BLENDER.COM/STAYCATION](http://BLENDER.COM/STAYCATION).



front of everyone. She kept her skirt on so it looked like a real intense lap dance. I *looooved* that!"

The muse hasn't left him since, but these days, T-Pain's strip-club visits are less of a contact sport. He got married at 18 (he proposed in a Bennigan's), and he has two children with his wife, Amber: daughter Lyriq, 4, and son Muzyq, 1. T-Pain paints a lively picture of domestic bliss: "My wife and I download pornos together," he says. "She goes with me to strip clubs. She'll be tipping bitches and everything." More sweetly: "I love reading my daughter to sleep—she loves this one book called *Ducks in Muck*." And, combining the smutty and the sweet: "I'll be at a club, just surrounded by ho's, and I'll literally call my wife, like, 'I'm so, so happy I married you.'"

His marriage helps him to put the surreal life into perspective, and it helps him to keep sight of Faheem Najm when he's recording as T-Pain. Even if it isn't the sexiest topic, he enjoys mining aspects of matrimony for material. One of the funniest moments on *Thr33 Ringz* comes on the song "Therapy," where a narrator tells an unloving woman, "I don't need your sex, I'll masturbate."

"See, that line comes straight out of my life!" he says. "I'm married, and I jerk off all the time. Some R&B singers act like they getting sex every night. T-Pain is here to tell you: Ain't no one getting sex every night!"



SURE, HE WON *AMERICAN IDOL*, BUT IF THIS WHOLE ROCK-STAR  
THING DOESN'T WORK OUT, **DAVID COOK** CAN ALWAYS FALL BACK ON  
HIS FORMER LIFE AS A BARTENDER. JUST REMIND HIM ONE MORE  
TIME—HOW DO YOU MAKE A SEX ON THE BEACH?

BY JOSH EELLS PHOTOGRAPHS BY TURE LILLEGRAVEN

TIP  
YOUR  
IDOL





Cook: "Actually, I'm who you gotta blow to get a drink around here."





The newest American Idol has no clue how to make a cosmo. "Let's see ... that's vodka, right?" asks David Cook, scanning the dozen or so liquor bottles arrayed in front of him. "And grapefruit juice? Or is that a sea breeze? It's not cranberry ..."

Stumped, he scratches his stubbled chin and looks up at the girl across the bar. "Sorry, sweetheart. Can I get you a Bud Light instead?"

Last May, the 26-year-old Cook pulled off one of the biggest upsets in reality TV, outdueling cherub-cheeked David Archuleta to become *American Idol*'s seventh champion. Tonight, though, he's getting back to his roots. Before he scored the most votes in *Idol* history, Cook was a struggling musician who made ends meet bartending at a Tulsa, Oklahoma, club called The Blank Slate. "It was a real laid-back, beer-and-blasters kind of place," he says. (A blaster is Jäger and Red Bull, for the uninitiated.) To relive those hungrier days (and earn a few bucks for charity in tips), he has hopped back behind the bar, at *Blender*'s request. After all, the track record for *Idol* alums is spotty at best, and if things don't work out, he might very well be making a living doing just what he is tonight—slinging drinks on the patio of L.A.'s storied Rainbow Bar and Grill, a rock-centric hot spot in the heart of the Sunset Strip, where Guns N' Roses shot the "November Rain" video, Mick Jagger and Elton John used to spend their Saturday nights, and John Lennon, Ringo Starr, Keith Moon and Rod Stewart once formed a soccer team (the Rainbow Hollywood Vampires).

"This place has stories, man," says Scotty, a grizzled rock warrior slouched on a stool at the patio bar, downing Jack Daniel's like it's Vitamin Water. He's been coming to the Rainbow since the early '80s, when he was a roadie for Dio and Lemmy. Later he went on tour as Alice Cooper's snake handler. ("The little fuckers'd get ya every now and then," he shrugs. "But nothing a shot of whiskey couldn't fix.") Scotty seems like the kind of old-school purist who might sniff at Cook—call him a poseur, bemoan the triumph of prefab pop artifice over authentic rock & roll. But the *Idol* juggernaut has charmed even this aging ax-head. "David Cook?" Scotty says. "That dude rocks! I voted for him six times." Cook arrives to pour a shot, and Scotty extends his hand. "Dude, you are by far the coolest *Idol* yet."

Even in a field where consensus building is the stock-in-trade, Cook has surprisingly wide appeal. Tweens like his moussed locks and dangerous-sounding growl. Moms like his wholesome vibe and inspirational story line (close-knit family, brother battling cancer). Rock fans dig his revved-up rearrangements and the fact that he plays guitar and writes his own songs. "I've never

been one to put music in a box," Cook says. "As a kid, I was into all kinds of stuff—Boyz II Men, Garth Brooks, White Zombie. Whatever I could find on the radio."

Cook grew up in Blue Springs, Missouri, a nondescript suburb a few miles outside Kansas City. He idolized George Brett and the hometown Royals and dreamed of being a star pitcher, until he realized his 75 mph fastball wasn't exactly big-league material and switched to music. His freshman year at Central Missouri State, he formed a band called Axiom, and when, after graduating with a degree in graphic design, he landed a gig playing rhythm guitar for a Tulsa band called the Midwest Kings, Cook moved to Oklahoma to do music full-time. "He was always aspiring for bigger things," says Neal Tiemann, Cook's then-bandmate and -roommate. "Even when there were five people at a show, you could see in his eyes that he wanted to be a star."

Cook started his night at the Rainbow a little rusty, but after downing a Miller Lite and a couple of shots of Patrón, he's beginning to warm up. He's even getting a little cocky, spinning his bottle opener like Tom Cruise in *Cocktail*. Thanks to the miracle of text messaging (OMG U'LL NEVER GUESS WHO'S AT THE RNBOW), the long-haired dudes in Metallica T-shirts have largely been supplanted by a swarm of girls, girls, girls. As it turns out, the same qualities that made Cook an *Idol* favorite also make him a pretty appealing bartender: self-effacing wit, aw-shucks charm and the kind of middle-American good looks that once earned him the title "Tulsa's Newest Heartthrob." He's flirtatious, sometimes even a little saucy. (Q: "Can you make a martini?" A: "A *dirty*



Cook to adult-film star Meggan Malone: "Why, yes, my navel is a bit fuzzy—why do you ask?"



martini ...") A blonde in heels and a leather miniskirt asks for a hug, and he happily obliges. "Omigod, thank you so much," she bubbles. "My mom is going to have a fit!"

Cook's blossoming relationship with *Idol* alum Kimberly Caldwell—they met when she interviewed him for the TV Guide Network—seems to deter exactly no one. An hour in, he's getting his first marriage proposal. The would-be bride's name is Mardwa, and she's a Saudi-American oil heiress. "I bought a satellite in Saudi Arabia just to watch you sing live!" she gushes. "I had a \$600 cell-phone bill from voting so much. David, you made me cry!" But despite promises of 10 percent of her oil money and a dowry of "at least 100 camels," Cook doesn't bite.

A second proposition seems a little harder to turn down. On his way back from the bathroom, Cook gets buttonholed by a willowy brunette in a tight black halter top. She says her name is Meggan Malone, that she's 21 and that she moved from Houston about a year ago to pursue an acting career.

"What kind of acting do you do?" he asks.

"I work for Vivid," she says—the adult-film empire. Cook looks stricken. Surely this is barred in his contract somewhere. Meggan squeezes his arm and pulls him in close, whispering something about Jenna Jameson and a double date. "That's very nice of you," Cook says. "But I think I have to pass."

"What about later?" she asks. "What time are you done?"

For the first time all night, Cook blushes: "Sorry, I gotta go."

After another hour of purple hooters and surfers on acid, Cook's shift is up. He takes a seat at table No. 12, a wine-red leather booth where, legend has it, John Bonham once passed out into a bowl of soup and Robert Plant pleased a groupie under the table. A parade of well-wishers take turns stopping by the table, and Cook is patient with all of them, signing autographs and posing gamely for camera-phone pics. "The fans are my favorite part," he says, and he seems genuinely happy to be approached.

For the moment, Cook exists in a weird rock-star limbo. On one hand, he's a household name with 32 million fans who once landed 11 songs on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in a single week—more than anyone since the Beatles. On the other, he has yet to release an album, and his biggest post-*Idol* achievement so far has been writing his ex-roommate a check for the \$1,200 he owed in back rent. ("I threw in a little extra, for interest," Cook says.) He claims the biggest celebrity he's met so far is ex-Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly and the most famous person he knows is still David Archuleta.

Cook's focus right now is his first record. Hard-rock vet Rob Cavallo (Green Day, My Chemical Romance) is on board to produce, and Cook has enlisted as cowriters several of the second-wave '90s grunge-rockers he grew up listening to: Our Lady Peace's Raine Maida, Collective Soul's Ed Roland, Better Than Ezra's Kevin Griffin. "I don't have any big illusions about success," he says. "My only goal is to do well enough to be able to make a second." Although, he adds, "selling a million would be pretty nice."

Cook has to be up early for a flight to London, so it's time to say good night. As he makes a beeline for the door, shaking a few more hands on the way out, Meggan Malone glides back up to him, clutching his arm.

"David, can I ask you one more question?"

Cook smiles. "Of course."

"I just wanted to know—is it worth it?"

"Is what worth it?"

"Being famous. All the bullshit you had to go through. I was just wondering if it's worth it."

Cook is a little taken aback. For a moment it's not a pop star and a porn star standing there, but two wide-eyed hopefuls on the edges of fame. He thinks for a minute, and finally smiles. "For the moment," he nods, "definitely." **D**

## I'LL HAVE A RUBEN!

MIXOLOGISTS KENDRA MATE FROM NYC HOT SPOT TENJUNE AND ELAYNE WERNS-DUKE FROM CIRQC VODKA CRAFT FOUR COCKTAILS YOU'LL NEVER SEE AT A BIKER BAR. BLENDER JUDGES



**KELLY CLARKSON**  
Country Lemonade  
Highball



1 1/2 oz. vodka  
2 oz. lemonade  
1/2 oz. simple syrup  
6 mint leaves  
soda water

**Directions:** Muddle mint with syrup. Add vodka, lemonade and ice, shake and strain over ice into Collins glass. Top with soda water.

**The verdict:** Refreshing, bubbly, nose-to-full-bodied. Sweet at first, but with a solid kick—just like Kelly!



**RUBEN STUDDARD**  
Velvet Teddybear  
Cocktail



1 1/4 oz. vodka  
2 oz. white grape juice  
1/4 oz. Jägermeister  
3/4 oz. honey syrup

**Directions:** Serve over ice in the fattest rocks glass available. Garnish with fresh-made love.

**The verdict:** The honey and Jäger warm the throat—and the soul. But the flavor fades, and the buzz dies down much quicker than we expected.



**CLAY AIKEN**  
Sugar & Spice  
Martini



1 oz. bourbon  
1/2 oz. pumpkin liqueur  
3/4 oz. ginger syrup  
1 oz. fresh orange juice

**Directions:** Serve chilled in a martini glass. Rim with cinnamon sugar.

**The verdict:** Aw, pumpkin! Though it's served straight up, it goes down surprisingly easy. Somehow, it tastes better right after Ruben's Velvet Teddybear Cocktail.



**CARRIE UNDERWOOD**  
The Blond  
Bullet



1 Bud Light  
1 can Diet 7UP

**Directions:** Unbutton top button of jeans. Put Underwood's "Jesus Take the Wheel" on the hi-fi. Pound Bud and steadily sip 7UP. Repeat as necessary while awaiting rapture.

**The verdict:** The Diet 7UP isn't as smooth going down as the beer, but the lemon-lime burps better. A simple combo for a Checotah, Oklahoma, gal.





# POWER PLAYER CHAMILLIONAIRE

HOUSTON RAPPER CHAMILLIONAIRE is known for his slow-cooked beats and catchy lyrics, but he's also a real-estate mogul and owns a custom-car business. We sat down with the "Mixtape Messiah" to get the story behind his music and his rides.

**YOU'RE FROM HOUSTON—HOW DOES THE ENERGY AND NIGHTLIFE COMPARE TO OTHER CITIES?**

There used to be a perception that people in Houston were living on farms with cattle everywhere, but it's a big, industrial city filled with party people and nightlife.

**YOU OWN THE FLY RYDES CUSTOM-CAR COMPANY. HOW DO YOU STAY ON TOP OF NEW TRENDS IN THE CAR-PIMPING BUSINESS?**

I think market research is the best way to know what's popular. I travel a lot, and my views about the newest trends come from seeing how people treat the car-pimping business all over the world.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CAR IN YOUR GARAGE?**

I'm a fan of old-school cars, so it's probably a tie between my 1964 drop-top Plymouth Fury and my 1965 drop-top Lincoln Continental.

**HOW DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR RIDES?**

I get an oil change every 3,000 miles, I only use plus or supreme gas, and I get my cars serviced regularly just to make sure everything is working like it's supposed to. The old-school vehicles last longer when you get them serviced regularly.

**IF YOU HAD TO EXPLAIN TO YOUR GIRLFRIEND WHY SHE NEEDS TO CHANGE THE OIL IN HER CAR ONCE IN A WHILE, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?**

I would recommend Castrol SYNTEC because I know it's not just built up off of hype—it does its job well. I would explain that every 3,000 miles the car gets dehydrated, and Castrol SYNTEC is like the spring water a vehicle needs to quench its thirst.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO EDYUANI MONTES-HUERTA OF CHASKA, MN**  
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THE RIGHT LANE.



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THE RIMS? BIG. THE PRICE TAGS? BIGGER! THE GAS MILEAGE? WHO CARES?!  
**A TRICKED-OUT TIMELINE OF RAP'S FAVORITE RIDES** BY CHRIS NORRIS

# MOTOR MOUTHS

**BE IT CADDY OR NAVI, BENZO OR LEXUS, A CAR IS THE RAPPER'S ETERNAL MUSE**, his constant companion on the road through life and in the search for stuff that rhymes with *Texas*. By dropping just the right make, a rapper can assert status, shout out a region—or tell a whole rags-to-riches saga in a mere Chevy-to-Bentley couplet. Few references so efficiently render an entire lifestyle as, say, a broke-ass '86 Honda or hater-stunning Escalade with 30-spoke rims. Naturally, car execs noticed this phenomenon and began extending product-placement deals to artists—creating a behind-the-scenes synergy that reached its surreal climax in a series of 2005 ads costarring Snoop Dogg and Lee Iacocca. But whether it's marketing or metaphor, shout-outs to key brands continue to loom large. Here, *Blender* takes a spin through the historic marriage of rap and ride—from the breakbeat-powered American sedan that dominated the old-school to the Southern-bouncing Japanese import of new-school chart-topper Lil Wayne—"an urban legend like a black Acura."



1979-PRESENT

## LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

Powered by Ford's massive 460 cid V8, this highly equipped luxury car was surpassed in size only by Cadillac's Fleetwood 75 limousine. Fly B-boys tended to overlook its 10-12 mpg in favor of its un-wack style and expansive cabin for "girlies."

**"I GOT TWO BIG CARS THAT DEFINITELY AIN'T THE WACK/I GOT A LINCOLN CONTINENTAL AND A SUNROOF CADDILLAC," SUGARHILL GANG, "RAPPER'S DELIGHT," 1979**

**"WENT TO THE PROM, WORE THE FLY BLUE RENTAL/GOT SIX GIRLIES IN MY LINCOLN CONTINENTAL," BEASTIE BOYS, "THE NEW STYLE," 1986**

**"I'LL BE GENTLE, SENTIMENTAL/SHIT, WE FUCKED IN A RENTAL/LINCOLN CONTINENTAL," SNOOP DOGG, "BITCH PLEASE," 1999**

1983-PRESENT

## CADILLAC

(BROUGHAM, DEVILLE, FLEETWOOD, SEVILLE, ET AL) The jewel in the crown of General Motors, the Cadillac brand symbolized wealth and prosperity in America's postwar years, gas-guzzling excess in the late-'70s and some pimp-ass player shit through three decades of hip-hop. It all started in the '30s, with Joe Louis being barred from a dealership due to his race. In response, Cadillac executive Nicholas Dreystadt aimed new advertising directly at black consumers. And since the late '70s, American rap groups have consistently provided endorsements for the esteemed brand. A famous rapper even created the mink-lined, DVD- and three-TV-screen-appointed Snoop DeVille.

**"I GOT A BIG LONG CADDY NOT LIKE A SEVILLE/AND WRITTEN RIGHT ON THE SIDE IT READS, 'DRESSED TO KILL,' RUN-D.M.C., 'IT'S LIKE THAT/SUCKER MCS,' 1983**

**"I'M ABOUT TO FUCK UP THE PROGRAM/SHOOTING OUT THE WINDOW OF A DROP-TOP BROUGHAM," ICE CUBE, "THE NIGGAY A LOVE TO HATE," 1990**

**"IT GOES CHROMES TO THE FLEETWOODS, COUPES TO THE 'VILLES/HITTIN' GIRBAUDS AND OFF THESE FLOWS WE HAVIN' THE PLAYA CHILL," OUTKAST, "TWO DOPE BOYZ (IN A CADILLAC)," 1996**

1988-PRESENT

## MERCEDES-BENZ

Seventeen years after providing the title of a Janis Joplin song about materialism, this German luxury-auto company was celebrated in a single by a Los Angeles quintet with deep reservations about law enforcement in its community. As hip-hop increasingly embraced materialism, the Mercedes-Benz became its all-but-official car—according to the San Francisco-based brand consultants Agenda, it's one of the most consistently referenced vehicle brands of the last 20 years.

**"YOU'D RATHER SEE ME IN THE PEN/THAN ME AND LORENZO ROLLIN' IN A BENZO," N.W.A., "FUCK THA POLICE," 1988**

**"PICTURE ME ROLLIN' IN MY 500 BENZ/I GOT NO LOVE FOR THESE NIGGAS, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE FRIENDS," 2PAC, "PICTURE ME ROLLIN'," 1996**

**"IF I WENT BACK TO A HOOTIE FROM A BENZ/ WOULD YOU POOF AND DISAPPEAR LIKE SOME OF MY FRIENDS?" 50 CENT, "21 QUESTIONS," 2003**





Dre (top right), fresh from another successful 1-8-7.



1990-1998

## MUSTANG 5.0 L

It was Ford's leading sports-class automobile since its 1964 introduction at the New York World's Fair. The pioneering pony car received a third-generation redesign that gave it a roomier backseat and a more aerodynamic body, and the 5.0 (actually a 4.9 liter/302 cid) came to inspire one of the largest aftermarket industries in the United States. Already a boxier car than the sleek 390 cid fastback that costarred with Steve McQueen in 1968's *Bullitt*, it underwent one of the most dramatic coolness downgrades in automotive history, in '90, thanks to Rob Van Winkle, a Caucasian rapper who claimed he could "flow like a harpoon."

**"ROLLIN' IN MY 5.0/WITH MY RAGTOP DOWN SO MY HAIR CAN BLOW," VANILLA ICE, "ICE ICE BABY," 1990**

**"2 A.M. ON SAWGRASS EXPRESS/PUT THE MOTHERFUCKIN' 5.0 TO THE TEST," POWER SUPPLY, "MY 5.0," 1994**

**"AIN'T ROLLIN' IN NO LEX LOU/AIN'T ROLLIN' IN NO BENZ COUPE/AIN'T GOT NO BMW/BUT I GOT 50 REASONS WHY," YA BOY BLACK ICE, "5.0 REASONS WHY," 1998**

1992-PRESENT

## '64 IMPALA

The most expensive marque in the Chevrolet lineup, this second-generation Impala was produced on a rear-wheel-drive GM B platform with rounded exterior styling and made available with either a small-block 327 cid engine or the big-block option feted in the Beach Boys early-'60s hit "409." A sweeping, modern, West Coast retrofit added multiple hydraulic pumps, galactic woofers, recessed clocks and rack-and-pinion pizzank to the car that would become the favorite creepin' vessel of Compton and Long Beach g's and area ho's.

**"ROLLIN' IN MY FOUR WITH 16 SWITCHES/AND GOT SOUNDS FOR THE BITCHES, CLOCKIN' ALL THE RICHES," DR. DRE, "LET MERIDE," 1992**

**"WANNA BE A BALLER, SHOT-CALLER/20-INCH BLADES ON THE IMPALA," LIL' TROY, "WANNA BE A BALLER," 1999**

1993-PRESENT

## JEEP

With a proud history of American military service dating back to World War II, this oldest of off-road vehicles was first produced as a civilian model in 1945 by the Willys-Overland company, then purchased by Kaiser, then AMC, before Chrysler secured the copyright in 1987. Since then, its standard design has featured a distinctive seven-slot grille, four-wheel drive, solid front and rear axles and backseats with full episode-swinging capability—a vehicular complement to early-'90s sturdy beats, squared-away flows and Timberland footwear.

**"YOU'RE THE TYPE OF GIRL THAT GOT CLASS AND STYLE/STILL, IN ALL YOU NEED THE BACKSEAT OF MY JEEP ONCE IN A WHILE," LL COOL J, "BACKSEAT," 1993**

**"BEEP, BEEP/WHO GOT THE KEYS TO THE JEEP?" MISSY ELLIOTT, "THE RAIN (SUPA DUPA FLY)," 1997**

**"SO DON'T SLEEP WHEN MY JEEP CREEP UP, HOW WE HIT 'EM/EMPTY THE CLIP, THEN DIP CUZ WE DID 'EM," 2PAC, "N.I.G.G.A. (NEVER IGNORANT ABOUT GETTING GOALS ACCOMPLISHED)," 2004**





1994-PRESENT

## LEXUS (LS 400, LX, coupe)

One of the most successful brand launches of the '90s, Toyota's luxury line debuted with the LS 400, a rear-wheel-drive sedan powered by a 4.0-liter 250 hp V8, whose sleek exteriors and cutting-edge features waxed the asses of both Mercedes and BMW in critic polls and became the highest-selling luxury import within a few years of its release. Its success shocked the Western companies that had dominated the market with their smoothed-out style and laid-back presentation, inaugurating a renaissance of flossy Eastern makes known for tighter handling, doper flows and hardcore baller style—particularly in the case of one heaviest Brooklynite, the brand's most consistent celebrant on record.

"THEY HEARD ABOUT THE ROLEXES AND THE LEXUS/WITH THE TEXAS LICENSE PLATES OUTTA STATE." **NOTORIOUS B.I.G., "WARNING," 1994**

"ON THE LEXUS LX, FOUR AND A HALF/ BULLET-PROOF GLASS TINTS IF I WANT SOME ASS." **NOTORIOUS B.I.G., "HYPNOTIZE," 1997**

"FAT LIKE A LEXUS COUPE, I'LL RIP YOUR TROOP/ NOT EVEN LOIS LANE COULD GET THE SCOOP." **NOTORIOUS B.I.G., "HOPE YOU NIGGAS SLEEP," 1999**

1995-PRESENT

## BENTLEY

Britain's renowned luxury marque was covertly purchased by Rolls-Royce in the '30s and in 1998 sold to Volkswagen, whose German ownership failed to taint the car's reputation as an emblem of regal English charm. Since the \$300,000 auto arrived on our shores just as rap became music's biggest corporate power, its rhyme presence signified the conquering of an empire. A "State Limousine" version was presented to Queen Elizabeth II in 2002's Golden Jubilee, but the line's most vocal U.S. adherents tended not to observe courtly protocols.

"BENTLEY'S LIMOUSINE, THE FRONT-YARD STREAM IS FULL OF PIRANHAS/I'M SET, A PRIVATE JET, I DRINK A LOT OF BECKS." **KOOL G RAP, "IT'S A SHAME," 1995**

"I BUST SIX OUT THE ROOF OF MY BENTLEY COUPE/HEAD SHOTS SO MOTHERFUCKERS CAN'T REGROUP CAN'T RECOUP." **PUFF DADDY, "REVERSE," 1999**

"I CAME IN YA BENTLEY BACKSEAT/SKEETED IN JEEP/LEFT CONDOMS IN THE BABY SEAT." **JAY-Z, "SUPA UGLY," 2002**

1998-PRESENT

## LINCOLN NAVIGATOR

Ford's largest luxury SUV and Lincoln's first four-wheel-drive vehicle was introduced in 1997 with a 5.4-liter Triton single-overhead-camshaft V8, fine wood, leather and carpeted interiors, a state-of-the-art marketing squad and the most eager branding participants in music history. Some of them actually joined the design team. "Sean John Navigators will be all black with Sean John emblems. They will sport big wheels, tinted windows, satellite radio, three DVD players, six TV screens, a Sony PlayStation 2, heated and vibrating front seats and a designer clock," *USA Today* reported in 2003.

"FEDS TRIED TO GET ME, YOU KNOW, THEY SOME HATERS/ I SAID, 'SEE YOU LATER,' JUMPED IN THE NAVIGATOR." **C-MURDER, IN SNOOP DOGG'S "DP GANGSTA," 1998**

"IF THE NAVI OUTSIDE, I MIGHT BE THERE/ BLACK HOODIE, BLACK 9, BLACK WIFEY AIRS." **THE GAME, "MONEY OVER BITCHES," 2005**

"SPENT A MILL' ON THE WHEELS CUSTOM WIT' THE NAVI/TWO OF THE SAME WHIPS WE DOIN' IT BIG LIVIN' LAVISH." **BIRDMAN, IN LIL WAYNE'S "YOU AIN'T KNOW," 2007**

# HONORABLE MENTIONS

THE WHIPS BEHIND HIP-HOP WISECRACKS, PLUS OTHER NOTABLE RIDES, ROVERS AND THE ONLY CAR THAT RHYMES WITH VALEDICTORIAN



**1980 SUBARU**  
"YOU GO OUT AT NIGHT EATIN' CARS/ YOU EAT CADILLACS, LINCOLNS TOO/ MERCURYS AND SUBARUS." **BLONDIE, "RAPTURE"**



**1987 OLDSMOBILE 98**  
"THEY DIDN'T GET ME, AND THAT'S THE TRUTH/ 'CAUSE THE 98-0 IS BULLET-PROOF." **PUBLIC ENEMY, "YOU'RE GONNA GET YOURS"**



**1989 BUICK ELECTRA 225**  
"MY HOOPTIE ROLLIN' TAILPIPE DRAGGIN'/ HEAT DON'T WORK AN' MY GIRL KEEPS NAGGIN'/ SIX-NINE BUICK DEUCE KEEPS ROLLIN'." **SIR MIX-A-LOT, "MY HOOPTIE"**

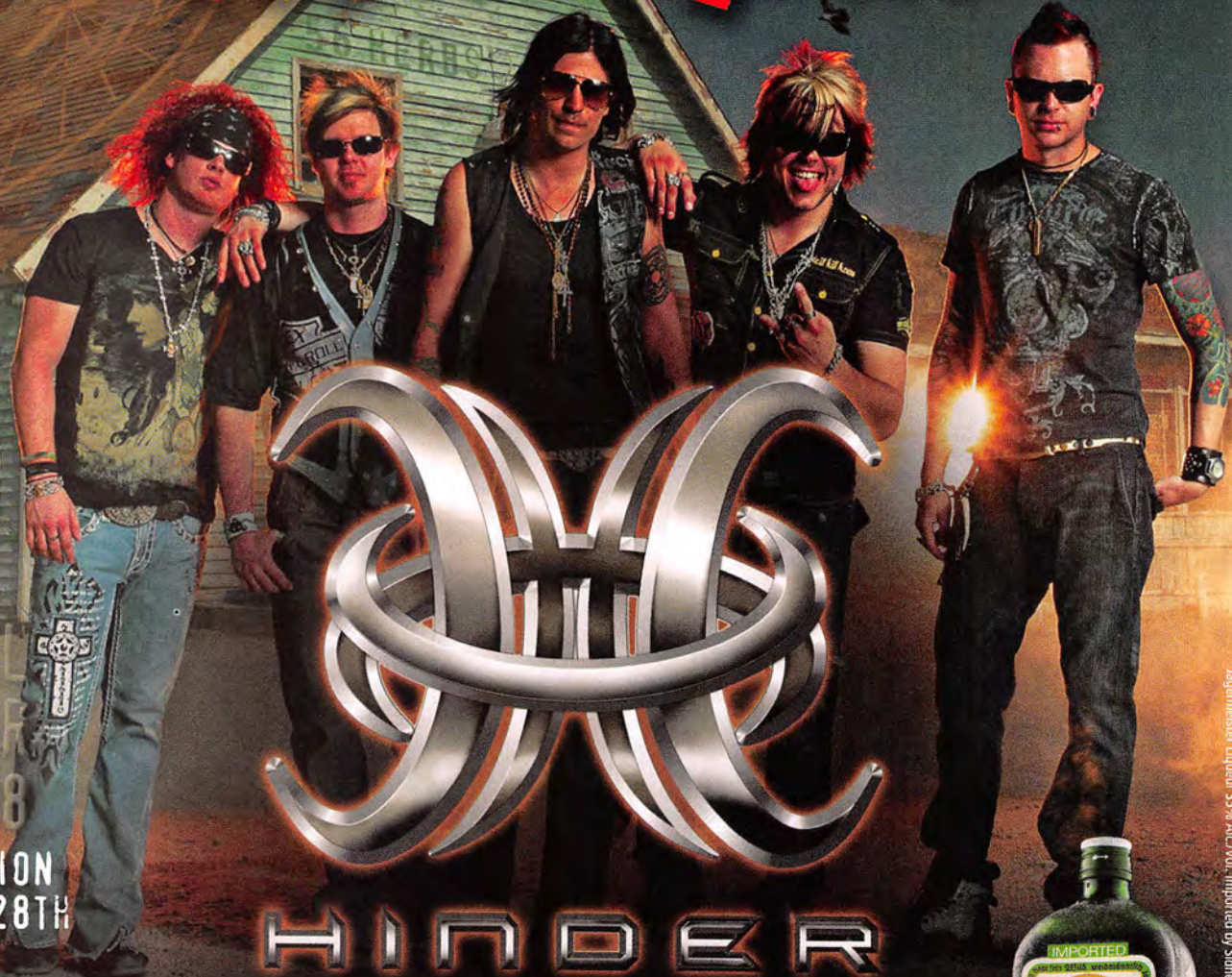
Page 66: Snoop Dogg: Frank Miceletta/Getty Images; Sugarhill: Canop; Michael O'Neil/Retna; Lincoln Continental: Ron Kimball/Kimballstock; Andis 2000: John Halpern/Retna; Big Boy: John Kimballstock; 50 Cent: Dimitrios Kambouris/WireImage; AWA: Howard Tyler/Retna; Tupac: Michael O'Neil/Retna; Mercedes-Benz: Kimball Stock Collection; Page 67: Dr. Dre: Shawn Mortenson/Corbis Outlines; Ya Boy Black Ice: Li Troy; Courtesy of Universal Music; Impat: Car Culture/Corbis; Page 68: Biggie: John Ricard/Retna; Bayle: Barron







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# THE GUIDE

THEY MAKE 'EM  
WE REVIEW 'EM

Metallica: "Once again, that's Larry's Leather Land, exit 47B, just past the Arby's!"



## RIGHTEOUS KILL

ROCK'S BIG-GAME HUNTERS REDISCOVER THEIR BARBARIC TASTE FOR SPEED AND DEATH  
BY BEN SISARIO

METALLICA DEATH MAGNETIC ★★★★★ WARNER BROS.

➤ Anger is not enough. You need death, gore, apocalyptic dread and a whole lot of pummeling double kick-drum to make a truly great metal album. Metallica knew this. Early on, they honed those basic elements into a kind of militaristic code and demonstrated their efficacy through four perfectly brutal, innovative albums, from the berserker whiplash of *Kill 'Em All* in 1983 to the controlled and cynical ... *And Justice for All* in 1988. But in the

'90s, while becoming some kind of stadium-filling, radio-dominating monster, they strayed far from their course—let us never speak of the symphonic *S&M* again—and even recorded an album while in the midst of group therapy. Those sessions yielded a juicy documentary, but also the psychobabble of 2003's *St. Anger*, a labored, awkward effort.

Enter Rick Rubin, Mr. Get Back to Where You Once Belonged. The man who produced



### BOB DYLAN

😊 A new cache of outtakes and live versions, from '87 on, sheds light on his midlife crisis and revival. Thankfully, no songs about trophy wives.

★★★★



### YOUNG JEEZY

😊 Put down that Suze Orman investment book. This Atlanta MC will tell you how to make a million right now. Hope you're up for slinging some crack.

★★★★



### QUEEN + PAUL RODGERS

😊 Half of Queen teams up with the belter from Bad Company. Freddie Mercury must be rolling over in his grave—flamboyantly, of course!

★



SCORE

CLASSIC  
5★

GREAT  
4★

GOOD  
3★

MEDIOCRE  
2★

FOUL  
1★

five Slayer albums and helped Johnny Cash craft his own stark epitaph has coaxed out Metallica's speed-metal demons for the band's most focused and viscerally satisfying work since the *Black Album*, 17 years ago. From the first track, "That Was Just Your Life," it's fast as hell, and nearly every song unfolds like a chase, with James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett's artillery riffs and Lars Ulrich's churning drums delivering the sound of unrelenting fate. "We hunt you down without mercy/Hunt you down all nightmare long," barks Hetfield, the Cerberus of this inferno. He indulges in gruesome imagery with distinctive cruel relish ("Mangled flesh, snapping spine/Dripping bloody valentine") and syntaxes rarely heard outside of ESL night classes ("Spinning sand we will not find").

Even at their most elaborate, Metallica songs are finely wrought killing machines with not a part to spare, and the gore obsession here is more than horror-movie boilerplate. In the venerable tradition of metal's single-minded bogeymen—iron men, powerslaves, wrathful Norse gods—Hetfield comes alive with the taste of blood, embracing the instinct to aggression "like a face that learns to speak when all it knew was how to bite." The violence is constant and extreme, like Itchy and Scratchy given an ammo budget, but Hetfield's hungry gulp of air preceding the last chorus to "All Nightmare Long" is a reminder of the humanity behind the gears of these songs.

Rubin pointed the direction, but credit goes to the band—which, for the first time on record, includes new bassist Robert Trujillo—for recapturing their old sound and reconciling it with what followed. "The End of the Line" and "Cyanide" seamlessly fold in the grungy blues-mosh of the *Load* era, and the first single, "The Day That Never Comes," is a quiet-to-loud-to-really-loud saga à la "One." Roving guitar solos pay playful homage to 1970s influences Thin Lizzy and Iron Maiden, and the knotty songs stretch to six, seven, even nine minutes as Hetfield roars about death, death, death.

As Grand Guignol theater it works in almost every case. But Hetfield isn't the same beer-guzzling buck who made *Kill 'Em All*. In order to step into his old skin, he has to stifle the wisdom and experience he's gained. Complicated emotions can clog up the machinery; it's no coincidence that one of the few missteps here is the string-laden "The Unforgiven III," which is filled with depths of regret and pain.

*St. Anger* sought rational and humane meanings in the bloodlust but ended up with shallow confessions like "I want my anger to be healthy." The struggle for maturity was a poignant success in *Some Kind of Monster*, but it distracted the band from its inspiration: its core brutality. On *Death Magnetic*, the instinct for cruelty turns out to be an even more liberating form of therapy.

**DOWNLOAD** "All Nightmare Long," "That Was Just Your Life," "Cyanide"



## Tales From the Studio

Lars Ulrich says old Metallica albums and fancy cheese inspired *Death Magnetic*

Where did the magic happen?

We recorded the basics at Sound City in Van Nuys. Rick Rubin wanted us to get out of HQ—our place in San Francisco—and closer to his.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how difficult was it to record this record?

Three. There was no nine-person documentary-film crew, no psychiatrist.

The money spent recording this album could buy...

A year's subscription to *Blender*. Trust me, all the flights we took to L.A. were on Southwest. They have the best on-time record. There's no first class. Who gives a shit? I'd rather be on time than sit in a seat that's two and a half inches wider.

Studio demands include?

Electricity.

You guys didn't have some vanilla-scented candles?

I think you can answer that yourself.

Most frequently ordered takeout dish?

Strange fruits and imported cheese.

Why should someone buy your album?

Because even people who are not on the payroll say it's really good.

Casualties during production?

Brain cells? Sanity? You've heard all that before. We didn't lose any band members, and we didn't have to do a midnight move-all-the-equipment-when-nobody's-watching dine and dash.

Album you unabashedly ripped off?

... *And Justice for All*.

The haters will say?

The same thing they've been saying since 1984: that Metallica is over. They hated us since the beginning, and they still hate us 25 years later, even though they have every record and go to every show. We have the No. 1 haters in the world. I'll put our haters up against any band's. Fuck you and your fucking entry-level haters! Ours fucking rule!

ELIZABETH GOODMAN

We have good news  
and bad news...

Brian Eno (left) and David Byrne: "Didn't those hookers say they'd be right back?"



## AC/DC BLACK ICE

★★★★  
COLUMBIA

Old Australian dogs learn some new tricks on CD sold solely through Walmart

Only jerks don't love AC/DC, but that doesn't mean we have to pretend that their rockiest rock isn't 30 years old. The problem isn't so much that they've re-released the same album forever; it's that their beer-battered groove turned clunky (and their bawdy puns plummeted) after Brian Johnson replaced the late Bon Scott in 1980. Half of their new truckload feels typically phoned-in. But sometimes they surprise you, nailing the signature sounds of their '70s boogie-metal brethren: Led Zeppelin in the pensive high-water blues "Rock n Roll Dream," ZZ Top in the barbecue-fired "Decibel" (rhymes with *jezebel*), Scottish sons of bitches Nazareth in the uncharacteristically overcast "Stormy May Day." Plus, by-the-book AC/DC—Angus Young's solos feel hardy even when the songs drag, and "Anything Goes" and "Big Jack" rev up like fast machines with clean motors.

CHUCK EDDY

**DOWNLOAD** "Stormy May Day," "Decibel"

## BLOC PARTY INTIMACY

★★★★  
ATLANTIC

One-time It Band can start a party, but can't keep it stoked

Bloc Party begin their third album with a helpful squirt of lighter fluid: Singer Kele Okereke couches his late-20s angst in the kind of fiery, Prodigy-style techno-rock that was all the rave in '90s London. He announces his intention to "declare a war," then cites the astrological phenomenon of Mercury entering retrograde, when stars set off communication breakdowns.

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AND MORE AT BLENDER.COM.**



Breakdowns, particularly in relationships, have preoccupied Okereke as Bloc Party struggled to define themselves, debuting as the hot dance-rock successors to Franz Ferdinand, then switching from beat-meisters to riff monsters. Here, they simply sound jittery, putting romantic complaints to studio-worked music that's oddly brisk and busy, with a dissonance that drowns out the emotion. Okereke is like an overstimulated, oversharing

50 has spent the last 20 years recording a series of carefully eclectic solo records, even the best of which suffered from a quiet complacency—as if, alone, Byrne was swallowed by his own tasteful, naive oddness. In his second collaboration with Brian Eno (1981's *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, sample-heavy and mostly instrumental, bears pretty much no resemblance to this), Byrne sounds adventurous once again, as if the lush tracks provided by

Deerhunter with their new keyboardist, Mufasa.



partygoer, torn between having a wild time and unloading his inner thoughts. He's better tearing up the dance floor.

NICK CATUCCI  
**DOWNLOAD** "Mercury," "Halo"

#### DAVID BYRNE & BRIAN ENO EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS WILL HAPPEN TODAY

★★★★  
EVERYTHINGTHATHAPPENS.COM

The Liz Taylor and Richard Burton of new wave make a graceful album from the vantage of middle age

David Byrne is best with company. The ex-Talking Heads frontman and perennial candidate for coolest person over

Eno encouraged him to inject a little of Talking Heads' comic jitter into his Central Park art songs. "I ride on a perfect freeway/Many

people on that road," he coos on the title track, then smoothly drops the punch line: "I heard the sound of someone laughing/I saw my neighbor's car explode." Eno's music is warm and inviting, full of wide spaces and quiet corners. It's a modest record, but also the first Byrne album in decades to feel sprung from outside the ex-Head's head space.

THEON WEBER  
**DOWNLOAD** "Strange Overtones," "I Feel My Stuff"

#### CHAIRLIFT DOES YOU INSPIRE YOU

★★★★

KANINE RECORDS

With songs about pencils and the food pyramid, it's like *Schoolhouse Rock* for hipsters!

This Brooklyn-by-way-of-Colorado trio's specialty—new-age nonsense meets '80s synth pop—is the musical equivalent of those T-shirts featuring nighttime wilderness scenes and Native American chieftains: kitsch-hip goofiness suffused with a simple and endearing Midwest charm. Caroline Polachek carries the melodic weight with a breathy and nimble contralto (think Dido), and she has a knack for enjoying childlike fantasies without sounding immature: On "Planet Health," she sighs about the food pyramid, stop-drop-and-roll, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and other fifth-grade health-class staples—it's a molasses-covered, electro-funk fantasy of innocence, and it throbs like Prince on sizzurp. Throughout, atmospheric ennuis tugs against upbeat synth-pop—this band is best when it's got a beat. Witness "Evident Utensil," doubtless the best dance track ever written about a pencil.

ALEX BENENSON

**DOWNLOAD** "Planet Health," "Evident Utensil"

#### NIKKA COSTA PEBBLE TO A PEARL

★★★★

GO FUNK YOURSELF/STAX

36-year-old funk siren whose dad arranged many of Frank Sinatra's greatest hits

When it comes to the current funk-and-soul revival, it's difficult to separate the nostalgic imitators from the nostalgic purebreds. So while Nikka Costa scored a minor 2001 hit with the hip-hop-tinged "Like a Feather," these relatively hollow recreations make it all too easy to lump her into the post-Amy Winehouse deluge of '60s- and '70s-obsessed startlets. "Pebble to a Pearl" bubbles and squeaks like Sly and the Family Stone, but the zip-locked funk is too sober for its own good; the blandly motivational "Keep Pushin'"

takes a lot from Curtis Mayfield without giving anything back. When Costa airs out the creaks in her voice, as on the pop-soul ballad "Someone for Everyone," she manages to pay tribute to her bald inspirations. Too often, though,

*Pebble* is like a falsely vintage digital photo with specks, grain and worn edges Photo-shopped in—it's convincing on the surface but crumbles under close inspection.

RYAN DOMBAL

**DOWNLOAD** "Someone for Everyone"

I LOVE THIS CD!



THE NATIONAL  
BOXER  
Beggars Banquet

"I've been listening to this on repeat since last summer. Seriously, it hasn't left the car CD player in a year. I love the lyrics, and I am obsessed with their drummer."  
—Bill Hader

#### DEAD CONFEDERATE WRECKING BALL

★★★★

THE ARTIST'S ORGANIZATION

Athens, Georgia, rockers create a soundtrack for last call in a bar you should've left hours ago

Calling all Civil War reenactors, ironic Lynyrd Skynyrd fans and those who discovered Nirvana on Camaro tape decks. Although the guys in Dead Confederate hadn't even sprouted pit hair in the late '90s, their music springs from the grunge era: quiet-loud-quiet structures, atomic drums and rich guitar dirges as dirty as a rut road and doused with space dust. Walker Howle's whiny slide guitar sews together the sonic hills and hollers, and Hardy Morris's nasal rasp electrifies "The Rat," where he portrays a surly rodent cussing out the religious right ("Stupid human/Shit for brains"). The album is crisper than the band's early-'08 EP, thanks to Spoon producer Mike McCarthy, who let the fury bounce around every inch of a cinder-block space in Austin—where, appropriately, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* sound effects were recorded.

TYLER GRAY

**DOWNLOAD** "The Rat," "Goner"

#### DEERHUNTER MICROCASTLE

★★★★

KRAUNKY

They call their music "ambient punk." They should call a shrink

Deerhunter songs unfold a little like that classic children's book *Where the Wild Things Are*: At the beginning, you think you're being tucked in to bed, but then things get really weird. Singer-guitarist Bradford Cox mumbles lullabies over slow, spooky drones—evoking wintry folk ballads or deep-space doo-wop or surf rock at low tide—that morph into psychedelic monsters. On two previous albums, the Atlanta quintet lets its mangled meanderings ramble on a little too formlessly (they're huge fans of hair-in-your-face early-'90s "shoegazer" indie rock), but here the songs are textured and shapely, with reverb and echo cranked to give an extra dollop of creepiness to lyrics about the joys of agoraphobia and being "captured by Victorian vampires." Scary. And at times, scary good.

JON DOLAN

**DOWNLOAD** "Nothing Ever Happened," "Little Kids"



## DR. STRANGE

ECCENTRIC KEYBOARD NERD PRETENDS TO BE DISCO SEX GOD, GETS EVEN MORE ECCENTRIC  
BY ROB SHEFFIELD



Like the Village People, but they're all the Indian.

OF MONTREAL *SKELETAL LAMPING* ★★★★★ POLY

Kevin Barnes is as close as indie pop gets to a velvet-hearted love man—he sings in the wiggly falsetto of a guy who treats his imaginary lovers like superstars and desperately wants to write a song for each and every one of them. *Skeletal Lamping* is a new high for this long-running yet just-peaking band. Barnes's passions are polysexual for sure—here he wants your "pleasure puss"; there he vows, "I wanna make you ejaculate/Till it's no longer fun." His biggest inspiration is Prince, especially his frilly-cummerbund, Restoration-dandy phase. Of Montreal turn Barnes's fragmented melodies into fizzy faux-funk ("Id Engager"), self-loathing piano balladry ("Touched Something's Hollow") and shout-outs to old-school disco ("Come and see/There's still some gentle people fucking to 'Strawberry Letter 23'"). *Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer?*, the musical breakthrough Of Montreal released last year, was a portrait of two lovers falling apart and coming halfway back together—on this successor, it sounds like they're working out their issues in the most primal ways.

DOWNLOAD "Id Engager," "St. Exquisite's Confessions," "Plushy Waters"

EAGLES OF DEATH METAL  
HEART ON

★★★★

DOWNTOWN

Third and finest album from chain-smoking Palm Desert boogie reprobates

Somewhere in the universe, there is a planet where it will always be 1974, and stoner dudes in muscle shirts will beat one

another senseless on the hoods of their Gran Torinos, if only to impress the Farrahs and Jaclyns. This is the only planet Jesse Hughes will ever call home. Eagles of Death Metal, once cluelessly dismissed as a one-joke band, have turned Hughes's obsessions into a surprisingly vibrant and durable style—they've already made more good

albums than Nazareth, Foghat and Black Oak Arkansas combined! With his buddy Josh Homme from Queens of the Stone Age, Hughes gets the details right all over *Heart On*. When it gets down to the final minute of "(I Used to Couldn't Dance) Tight Pants," right when you start thinking, *Damn, this song sure could use some bonehead Joe Walsh-style talk-box guitar*, Hughes is already waiting with the goodies.

ROB SHEFFIELD

DOWNLOAD "Wannabe in L.A.,"

"Prissy Prancin'," "(I Used to Couldn't Dance) Tight Pants"

GANG GANG DANCE  
SAINT DYMHPNA

★★★★

THE SOCIAL REGISTRY

Art-damaged Brooklynites make the rockiest meditation music you'll hear all year

Onstage, Gang Gang Dance singer Lizzi Bougatsos wears gypsy head wraps, Indian saris and Ghostface Killah T-shirts. It's a perfect wardrobe for her band's hip-hop, streetwise vision of new age: They weave together syncopated conga clatter, trancey zip-zap and pillowy synths fit for Brian Eno's drool. Think Enigma with an art-school degree. GGD's career has been a gradual climb out of primordial noise muck and toward beats, and album four is their most propulsive. "First Communion" rides a percolating mishmash of Afropop riffs and techno thuds, and "House Jam" combines Bougatsos's airy histrionics ("Will clouds carry my tears for you?" she hoots) with stroboscopic rave sounds. But the album ends with "Dust," a twinkling five-and-a-half-minute spa treatment—for all the jittery dance tracks, their chill-out room is just as mesmerizing.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD "First Communion," "House Jam," "Dust"

JOLIE HOLLAND  
THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

★★★★

ANTI-

Texas singer-songwriter and vintage enthusiast reins in quirks, salutes Jack Kerouac and Edie Sedgwick

Jolie Holland should be redundant: Her fetish for country's cobwebby corners postdates Neko Case, her mangled vowels and husky torment recall Cat Power's Chan Marshall and her tales of corrupted innocence follow in Lucinda Williams's sizable wake. Does anyone need another vocally mannered, boho-soul chick with a lust for the dark side? But Holland's fourth album—far and away her strongest—is flawlessly executed and fearlessly told. In "Mexico City," scratched acoustic guitar and a half-century-old backbeat evoke a netherworld between love and remorse, hallucination and grim reality: "Jack and Edie, laying

across my bed/Flying high, like the spirits of the dead." "Palmyra" is a requiem for New Orleans and the sins Holland committed there. Retro-atmospheric guru M. Ward and grizzled guitar genius Marc Ribot leave their dusty fingerprints. Holland leaves behind a trail of her own.

KAREN SCHOEMER

DOWNLOAD "Mexico City," "Sweet Loving Man," "You Painted Yourself In"

BENJI HUGHES  
A LOVE EXTREME

★★★★

NEW WEST

Former house painter debuts with a gluttonous 25 tracks

Dude looks like Zakk Wylde gone bad: aviators, crazy long hair, paunch. Dude comes from North Carolina, but he doesn't sound very Southern—he sounds like he learned to speak by listening to his record collection. Here is a guy yearning for something to happen in his life: One song confesses he's "waiting for an invitation"—to a party that never comes—and the next one is pointedly called "Why Do These Parties Always End Up the Same?" He's still hoping, sweetly, for his luck to change. Which is what this inspired, gently deranged double CD is about: going all out when you think your



Gang Gang Dance? More like Gang Gang Sit!

moment is finally at hand. With music that evokes cheesy early-'70s MOR and the modern Hollywood-hipster songbook invented by Beck, this is pop that gets out and moves, and has you rooting for the wallflower with the yawn voice to do the same.

RJ SMITH

DOWNLOAD "Neighbor Down the Hall," "Where Do Old Lovers Go?"

KARDINAL OFFSHALL  
NOT 4 SALE

★★★★

INTERSCOPE/KON LIVE MUSIC

Meet Jason Harrow, the biggest Canadian rapper since Snow!

Born in Toronto to Jamaican parents—call him Cana-daican—32-year-old Kardinal



Offishall has been making waves above the border for more than a decade. Now signed to Akon's Konvict Music label, variety is his selling point in the U.S., where his jingle of a duet with Akon, "Dangerous," has already earned him a No. 2 hit. Kardi, as he's known, is part Busta Rhymes, rapping in a brash, bad-mouthed style; part Beenie Man, chatting dancehall lyrics rapid-fire; and part 50 Cent, delivering vastly catchy, badly sung hooks. Considering his versatility—on most tracks he veers flawlessly between hip-hop slang and thick Jamaican patois—it's a wonder his album gets monotonous. Bloated beats are to blame: High amplitude, stadium friendly and repetitive, they drown out his boasts about "tryin' to give my tax bracket an erection." Guest stints by R&B throats Glenn Lewis and Estelle lively up the mix, but Kardi can really stand alone—if only pared-down production would let him.

BAZ DREISINGER

**DOWNLOAD** "Due Me a Favor," "Family Tree (Still Everize)"

#### KEANE

PERFECT SYMMETRY

★★★★

INTERSCOPE

**Earnest Englishmen mine the mid-'80s for synths and sermons**

It's a big, confusing world out there, fret Keane. Their solution: more synthesizers! Perhaps bored with comparisons to old friends Coldplay, the guitarless English trio has trucked in bright, brash, Reagan-era keyboards that align the likes of "Spiralling" with such smart pop operators as ABC. Abetted by Madonna producer Stuart Price, it's a striking development but a cosmetic one. Beneath the glitz lies the vague rumble of state-of-the-planet blues, with singer Tom Chaplin frowning over Internet news sites (the title track) and cowering behind "a rock & roll song" from "the sound of bombs" ("Playing Along"), like Simple Minds' Jim Kerr at his most self-serious. Despite its boldness, *Perfect Symmetry* is as swollen with corny grandeur as a political convention, guided by the delusion that a pompous speech somehow becomes fun if it's accompanied by a balloon drop.

DORIAN LYNSEY

**DOWNLOAD** "Spiralling"

#### LAMBCHOP

OH (OHIO)

★★★★

MERGE

**Leader of "Nashville's most fucked-up country band" sits on the bar stool of life and sips the highball of fate**

Kurt Wagner has been exploring his surreal country sensibility for 15 years, and he's held on to his deadpan baritone

whether he was chronicling death ("Soaky in the Pooper"), desire ("Blame It on the Brunettes") or old-fashioned romance ("My Face Your Ass"). For his 10th album, Wagner strips his band down to seven core members, going for an intimate, live-in-the-room feel.

**ASTONISHING FACT** Growing up in Tennessee, **BENJI HUGHES** was so close with the family cat, Michalos, that they ate the same meals: They shared a loyalty to Friskies dry cat food.

Leisurely saloon ballads "Please Rise" and "National Talk Like a Pirate Day" take their time to give up their secrets—the music evokes the slow-motion grouchy ambience of Leonard Cohen

waking up in the afternoon and deciding whether to bother shaving for room service. *OH (Ohio)* ends with a straight-faced rendition of the hokey country standard "I Believe in You," with lyrical mush about dogs and babies, but Wagner sings it like he wants to believe every word.

ROB SHEFFIELD

**DOWNLOAD** "Sharing a Gibson With Martin Luther King Jr.," "Please Rise," "I'm Thinking of a Number (Between 1 and 2)"

#### THE LITTLE ONES

MORNING TIDE

★★★★

CHOP SHOP/ATLANTIC

**On their debut, L.A. joy mongers invite you to their twee party**

For the biggest Little One, singer Ed Reyes, shouting from the mountaintop would be too much; he'd rather coo his innocent joy from the anthills. Likes: long walks on the beach ("Boracay"), teaching children well ("Farm Song"), AM-radio hits ("Ordinary Song"). Dislikes: rude awakenings ("Rise & Shine"). As much as they come off like latter-day L.A. hippies—their flower power derived from sunshine and solar panels—the quintet hints at the inevitable harshed mellow. They're intensely twee indie rockers, prone to brisk, even jittery, grooves, and with his pinched voice, Reyes sounds as though he's grasping at something just out of reach. In "Like a Spoke on a Wheel," he sings, "In harmony's weave I felt so complete." That's his hope, you sense, not his reality.

NICK CATUCCI

**DOWNLOAD** "Morning Tide," "Ordinary Song"

#### MARGOT & THE NUCLEAR

SO AND SO'S

NOT ANIMAL

★★★★

ANIMAL!

★★★★

EPIC

**Worst-named new band of 2008 drives its record company crazy**

This Indianapolis collective creates clever chamber pop that stretches skyward with keyboards, harmonica and an occasional horn or string section. In keeping with that overstuffed spirit, their first major-label album has two versions: *Not*

# BECAUSE WE LOVE YOU: THE BLENDER MIX

Vol. 5

FREE MUSIC! TEN NEW  
BANDS THAT WILL  
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#### JOLIE HOLLAND "MEXICO CITY"

Gentle, dusty country rock about booze and Mexican ghosts. *jAy caramba!*

#### TOBACCO FEAT. AESOP ROCK "DIRT"

A trippy psych-jam from the frontman for experimental weirdos Black Moth Super Rainbow and one of his rapper pals.

#### HOSPITAL SHIPS "BITTER RADIO SINGLE"

A Lawrence, Kansas, indie vet gets his misanthrope on—lushly, prettily.

#### TAKKA TAKKA "EVERYBODY SAY"

Softly groovy art-rock from a Brooklyn, New York, band whose name is Tongan for *hipster*. (OK, not really.)

#### TRICKY "PUPPY TOY"

This trip-hop vet's bluesy new anti-ballad is brought to you by pooch pleasers.

#### JESSICA LEA MAYFIELD "KISS ME AGAIN"

This 18-year-old folkie (and Black Keys protégée) likes kisses and plaintive guitar strumming, not necessarily in that order.

#### THE WALKMEN "IN THE NEW YEAR"

To hear these NYC coolsters tell it, 2009 is gonna be pretty freakin' awesome!

#### CHAIRLIFT "EVIDENT UTENSIL"

From a coed trio, the sunniest, funkiest song about a No. 2 pencil ever recorded.

#### EZRA FURMAN AND THE HARPOONS

"TAKE OFF YOUR SUNGLASSES"

Indie rock's second most famous Ezra rocks out with a sassy, anti-Ray-Ban rave.

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Tampa, Florida's finest topless busty lesbian rappers have a simple request: Get dat ass on the flo!

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# THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES

*Animal*, approved by Epic, and *Animal!*, which offers more adventurous material but not *Not Animal*'s five strongest songs. In either version, the album splits the difference between smart and smarty-pants: The articulate arrangements occasionally overdo the left-field instrumentation, and Richard Edwards's empathetic short-story tales flirt with fussiness. In "A Children's Crusade on Acid," he moans over distant guitar feedback and dime-store percussion, "Sarah, settle down/Put your helmet on/Walk through streets of gold/With cigarettes you hand-rolled." When they peel away the clutter, as on "German Motor Car," the easygoing beauty makes simplicity sound like the smartest of all strategies.

TIM GRIERSON

**DOWNLOAD** "German Motor Car," "Cold, Kind, and Lemon Eyes"

## OASIS

DIG OUT YOUR SOUL

★★★

BIG BROTHER/WARNER BROS.

Gallagher brothers' heaviest record since 1997's *Be Here Now* is also their best

After Oasis's mid-'90s winning streak ended, their following pared back to its core of louts, hooligans and mouth-breathers. The rest of us have missed only an occasional belling single, such as "Lyta,"

from 2006. And though *Dig Out Your Soul* is not mid-'90s in quality, its newly gloomy stomp and deafening, saw-tooth guitars recall a time when Oasis were thought dangerous. The two awful songs—"Waiting for the Rapture" and "(Get Off Your) High Horse Lady"—and fridge-magnet Beatles lyrics ("Love is a litany/A magical mystery") are par for the course, and the payoffs include the two best songs singer Liam Gallagher has yet written: the strident,

balladic "I'm Outta Time" and the snarling "Ain't Got Nothin'." Overall, *Dig Out Your Soul* is a dark, heavy, chart-snubbing record that acts Oasis's age (main songwriter Noel Gallagher is 42) and is their first in eons that doesn't seem desperate to please. Oasis have their devil back.

TONY POWER

**DOWNLOAD** "The Shock of the Lightning," "Bag It Up"

## PRETENDERS

BREAK UP THE CONCRETE

★★★★

SHANGRI-LA

Midwest-born punk-rock queen would like to find a hot young boyfriend

Chrissie Hynde is still the same butch, brash maelstrom who belted, "I'm special!" on the Pretenders' first hit 28 years ago. Now 57, she's held on to that bravado, even when her tone turns to august reflection. The Pretenders' ninth studio album is a pleasant roots record. Backed by some British guys young enough to call her "Mum," Hynde sings about May-September romance and the search for the paved-over soul of her busted hometown, Akron, Ohio, against '50s-style rock & roll bangers, occasionally tinged with wistful twang. It never feels like old-punkers' day, not just because her breathy snarl hasn't aged much, but because she's as much herself singing about ogling a boy "in boots of Chinese plastic" as she is remembering gentle moments shared underneath the indigenous trees of Ohio.

JON DOLAN

**DOWNLOAD** "Love's a Mystery," "Break Up the Concrete"

## QUEEN + PAUL RODGERS

THE COSMOS ROCKS

★

HOLLYWOOD

Queen without the queeniness: not regal, or even much fun

Brian May and Roger Taylor of Queen have one thing in common with macho belter Paul Rodgers: They lack the dignity of former Queen bassist John Deacon, who retired after



FUCKED UP THE CHEMISTRY OF COMMON LIFE ★★★★★ MATADOR

Canadian punks crank it up to eleven so the world can hear how much they think it sucks



With a name like Fucked Up, being merely messed up won't cut it. And this Toronto band delivers: shows that turn into riots and a shirtless flesh-mountain singer named Pink Eyes who sounds like he's gargling boulders while he yowls things like "we ex-PLODE!" Previous works have included an 18-minute song about the Canadian sex trade, called "Year of the Pig." Here, they combine hardcore punk's combat-boot side with its tortured-noise side, layering what sounds like scores of tsunami-distortion guitars over an atomic-speed drum blitz to attain rarely witnessed levels of obliteration (think Black Flag reincarnated as psychotic yetis). When discernible, Pink Eyes' bullhorn lectures aren't much more than a mystical-religious twist on the standard anti-conformist ranting you'd hear over a bowl of vegan chili at an anarchist squat. But rage-aholic kicks like this ex-PLODE onto the scene only every stupid American war or so.

JON DOLAN

**DOWNLOAD** "Black Albino Bones," "No Epiphany," "Crooked Head"

the death of bandmate and irreplaceable frontman Freddie Mercury. To reconcile their stylistic differences with Rodgers, guitarist May and drummer Taylor replicate their guest's lean '70s biker-rock machine, Bad Company, and, thanks to Rodgers's still-enviable lung power, they muster a fair amount of bluster. But unintentionally camp lyrics like "Once I loved a butterfly/Don't wonder how, don't ask me why" squash the mood of midlife ballsiness. Alternating rave-ups with overwrought ballads, this mismatched combo brings out the best in each other only on the refreshingly lightweight "Call Me," where Rodgers crows like a country rooster while May and Taylor approximate a pampered peacock strut.

BARRY WALTERS

**DOWNLOAD** "Call Me"

## SECRET MACHINES

SECRET MACHINES

★★★★

WORLD'S FAIR

Stoned Texans channel Emily Brontë, make good use of big-ass drums

If David Lynch were to direct a remake of the Victorian romance *Wuthering Heights*, he wouldn't need to commission a soundtrack: Secret Machines have recorded it. "Underneath the Concrete" and the lead single, "Atomic Heels," reprise the intergalactic acid rock of previous Machines records. But when Benjamin Curtis (brother of frontman Brendan) left last year, he apparently took all the psychedelic vinyl; except for the ill-advised ballad "Now You're Gone," the band has turned to the gothic trance of Bauhaus and Nine Inch Nails. On "Have I Run Out," theatrical kettledrums and tense strings introduce a beautiful sense of dreamy anguish. And



Margot & the Nuclear So and So's: Christ, there are a lot of people in this band!



"The Walls Are Starting to Crack" showcases the power of their new identity as apocalypse-heralding romantics: As violent electro blips transition into harrowing voices and melodramatic piano, you can almost see Cathy running through the moors to meet, like, Kyle McLaughlin at Peniston Crag.

ELIZABETH GOODMAN

**DOWNLOAD** "Atomic Heels," "The Walls Are Starting to Crack"

## TODD SNIDER PEACE QUEER

★★★★

AIMLESS

**Bush jokes aren't funny anymore, says a Nashville cutup who has told his share**

Over his past few albums, Todd Snider morphed from a wisecracking country-ish journeyman to the sharpest and funniest protest singer working today—Pete Seeger with a pickup truck and a sense of humor. But more than seven years into the reign of George Bush, Snider isn't laughing anymore. On this eight-song EP—available for free on his Web site—the amiable 42-year-old lends his peach-cobbler drawl to songs about maimed soldiers and power-drunk bullies, a doleful cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate

Son" and "Mission Accomplished (Because You Gotta Have Faith)," which deploys a Bo Diddley beat to excoriate a leader who "drove us off a cliff and told us we were flyin'." Still, the real evildoer is the protagonist in "Dividing the Estate (A Heart Attack)"—an 800-pound gorilla of a metaphor named Sam, who as a youngster was humble and idealistic but wound up fat, rich and unhappy with his standing in the world and too lazy to do anything about it. Sound like any country you know?

JOSH EELLS

**DOWNLOAD** "Stuck on the Corner (Prelude to a Heart Attack)," "The Ballad of Cape Henry"

## MARNIE STERN THIS IS IT AND I AM IT AND YOU ARE IT AND SO IS THAT ...

★★★★

KILL ROCK STARS

**She looks like Debbie Gibson, but her riffs could make Wayne and Garth weep**

Her hair is Stevie Nicks blond, her voice is pitched just below a wood sprite's and watercolor pastorals fill her album art: A fox nestles with a chicken in a flower patch; a unicorn ascends a rocky butte. And yet, Marnie Stern shreds. The New York native's second album is more clear and

lean than her 2007 debut, but the artsy, borderline-assaultive basics remain unchanged. As drummer Zach Hill's snares splatter across songs the way blood splatters across *Saw* movies, Stern's riffs explode into flurries of synco-pated notes—flocks of birds zigzagging through a forest fire. Chattering about dolphin visions here ("Prime"), the hungry rush of courtship there ("The Devil's in

the Details"), she throws a feminine monkey wrench into the hyper-phallic tradition of *duuuude!*-caliber fret twiddling. Her music is exhilarating, enigma-packed and, despite the unceasing noise barrage, winningly sweet.

JONAH WEINER

**DOWNLOAD** "Shea Stadium," "The Crippled Jazzer," "The Devil's in the Details"

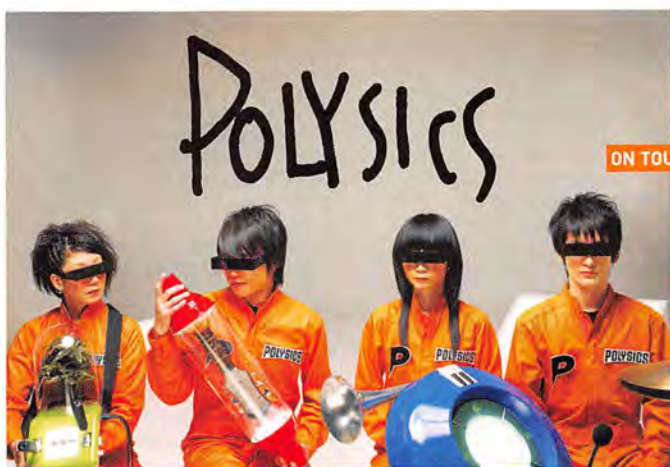
## THE STREETS EVERYTHING IS BORROWED

★★★★

VICE

**British rap goofball contemplates evolutionary ornithology instead of blow**

"Everybody do the dodo!" commands Mike Skinner, creating a dance craze out of a warning that humans are about to become extinct. The Birmingham rapper who's been recording as the Streets since 2002 usually finds ways to make his pub slang, cheap, skittery U.K. club beats and documentary descriptions of working-class boredom seem universal. But where the last Streets record was mainly about coming up with new words to describe cocaine, the fourth is surprisingly expansive and often quite deep. Skinner incorporates jazz piano, acid-funk guitar and



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\*Jaguar Love not appearing

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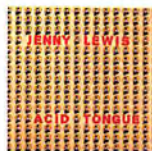
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THE BEST  
NEW RELEASES  
FROM THE  
PAST MONTHS



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With a voice as clear and hot as melting glass, Rilo Kiley's redheaded CEO gets her bad girl on.



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**Lessons in Love**  
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With the slinkiest, breathiest softie in R&B, you don't knock boots—you gently bump slippers.



**Solange Knowles**  
**Sol-Angel and the Hadley Street Dreams**  
Geffen  
Sun-dappled, Motown-kissed R&B from pop's most promising little sis since Ashlee.



**TV on the Radio**  
**Dear Science**  
Interscope  
B.Y.O.A. (Bring Your Own Anomie)—indie rock's hippest band throws a party at the apocalypse.

Tricky: "Maybe I shouldn't have ordered extra spicy."



**TRICKY**  
**KNOWLE WEST BOY**

★★★★

DOMINO

**British sort-of-rapper returns, mobbed-up, after a five-year silence**

► "I'm a Muslim, I'm a Jew/I'm Ku Klux Klan, I'm a nigger too." That claim, from "Coalition," is pretty outlandish, but Tricky—the unorthodox MC-producer who debuted in 1995 by posing in a wedding dress and covering Public Enemy with a Nirvana-loving Englishwoman in the Chuck D role—has always relished stretching identity like taffy. On *Knowle West Boy*, named for his hard-knock Bristol, England, origins, the former Massive Attack outrider ventriloquizes through several unfamiliar vocalists, male and female, often letting his own grainy purr trail behind them like a shadow or an echo. The music, coproduced by M.I.A. confederate Switch, warps and wanders too, from rock-rap to dancehall to new wave to folk. So while the ghetto reminiscences of "Council Estate" and "School Gates" revisit where Tricky's from, he's still finding new places to go.

DORIAN LYNKEY

**DOWNLOAD** "Cross to Bear," "Coalition," "School Gates"

**VIVIAN GIRLS**  
**VIVIAN GIRLS**

★★★★

IN THE RED

**A blonde, a brunette and a red-head walk into a bar, drink all the other bands under the table**

► These Brooklyn gals have a guitarist named Cassie Ramone and a bassist named Kickball Katy, so it goes without saying they're not very interested in long solos, complex time signatures or rethinking the studio as an instrument. What they're

interested in is sassy guitar racket, with a bit of B-52's beach-party frolic in their beat. The recording quality on their debut album is admirably scuzzy; the drums sound like somebody's banging a cereal box on the floor, which is part of the immediate charm. The jangly guitars would basically fit into any time or place—from the sound, you couldn't guess whether the Vivian Girls come from 1986 London (they would have been called the Toffee-shop Tabbys) or 1992 Portland (they would have been called Care Bears Lunchbox) or 2001 Detroit (they would have been called the Muzzzttaangs). When they harmonize in the wistful "Tell the World," they stick in the ear, though it's hard to imagine them telling the world anything, except maybe where to pick up some cheap vintage corduroys.

ROB SHEFFIELD

**DOWNLOAD** "Tell the World," "Where Do You Run to," "Damaged"

**RACEBANNON**  
**ACID OR BLOOD**  
SOUTHERN



TRICKY: TIMOTHY SACCENTI



**LUCINDA WILLIAMS**  
**LITTLE HONEY**

★★★★

LOST HIGHWAY

**Reigning roots-rock song-poet gets tangled up in her own old themes**

► "Standing up behind an electric guitar/It's a real love, it's a real love," Lucinda Williams crows in her well-schooled drawl on the opener. And right, the guitars sound great—the bandleading she revved up after finally putting her songs across commercially with 1998's *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road* keeps getting more solid and less stolid. Only thing is, Williams is celebrating not the ax but the guy wielding it. And despite the meta-physical yet conversational "Knowing" and a sexed-up title track that begins with his come in her hair, she doesn't offer enough evidence that her new love is any realer than all the others she's exulted and struggled through in eight albums going back to 1979. "Tears of Joy" is as soggy as the cliché it means to redeem, and though "If Wishes Were Horses" turns the same trick with a twist—"I'd have a ranch," nice—its "give me another chance" is just a rhyme. Even more problematic are three artistic travail songs,

particularly the unforgivable nine-minute "Rarity," which so overstates its praise for an underappreciated genius it could almost be Williams's love song to herself.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

**DOWNLOAD** "Honey Bee," "Real Love"

**YO! MAJESTY**

**FUTURISTICALLY SPEAKING ... NEVER BE AFRAID**

★★★★

DOMINO

**Sex and violence from the world's preeminent lesbian Christian-rap duo**

► When Yo! Majesty released their maiden EP in 2006, they set up shop in the hip-hop wilderness. Three hulking lesbians (they've since dropped down to a duo) speed-rapping about sexual domination over throwback electro beats, they weren't exactly *106 & Park* material. More like *Jerry Springer*: MCs Jwl. B and Shunda K met in 2001 at a gay nightclub in Florida, and Shunda quit the group for several years and married a missionary before returning to music (and the love of women). They hijack typically male-owned pop themes—onstage, Jwl regularly tears off her shirt, showing her tits in a move that's as much an act of

aggression as a come-on. The craziest moment on this debut LP is "Fucked Up," where they beg to have their pussies eaten one second, their teeth smashed the next. It's an abrasive, masochistic jam about manic desire, a deranged scream from even farther out in the woods.

JONAH WEINER

**DOWNLOAD** "Club Action," "Night Riders"

**YOUNG JEEZY**

**THE RECESSION**

★★★★

DEF JAM

**Atlanta MC knows all about economic theory; has a Lamborghini to prove it**

► Since 2005, Young Jeezy has posed an audacious question: Can drug rap count as community service? That question animates *The Recession*, with an added twist straight from the financial pages: Can it be a stimulus package, too? "I could show you how to make a mil right now," Jeezy raps over a viscous synthesizer stew on "What They Want." If recession-era Jeezy sounds a lot like boom-time Jeezy—describing coke cooking and the cars one gets in reward—that's because he has always fancied himself an educator, a Learning Annex lecturer, an inspirational-desktop-calendar

hustler. He's not proposing policy here; he's celebrating his black-market route to American success. Dark subtext No. 1: That was the best route available to him. No. 2: Since long before the mortgage crisis, plenty of inner-city strivers have been stuck in a recession of their own and will still be there long after Wall Street starts celebrating again.

JONAH WEINER

**DOWNLOAD** "What They Want," "My President" **D**

"I love her whole package. She is adorable and stylish and her songs are so bubbly and catchy. You hear one and it sticks in your head for days." —Lauren Conrad

**KATY PERRY**  
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# KNOCKIN' ON RETIREMENT'S DOOR

A CACHE OF UNHEARD SONGS SHOWS HOW DYLAN PULLED OUT OF A MIDLIFE DOWNWARD SPIRAL BY JOE LEVY



"Hey, this harmonica tastes funny."

BOB DYLAN *TELL TALE SIGNS* ★★★★★ COLUMBIA

OUR STORY STARTS at the end, or at least it feels like the end. The great man is nursing a broken ego and a busted hand at home in Santa Monica. It's 1987, and for 10 years or more he has tried both keeping up and checking out—sometimes at the same moment—while the world he once shaped has fixated on what he did in the '60s. It has left him lost, his music an empty tangle. He's thinking about quitting. Maybe just walking until he gets to a place where someone will point at the acoustic guitar slung over his shoulder and ask, "What's that?"

That's how Bob Dylan described it in his autobiography, *Chronicles*, one of the many ways in which he's recently taken the reins of his legacy. *Tell Tale Signs*—the eighth volume of the erratic and fascinating *Bootleg Series*, exhuming his unreleased music—begins there, at the fitful start of his regeneration: Dylan is in New Orleans to record *Oh Mercy* with Daniel Lanois, a Canadian producer with a ponytail and a taste for mystical doses of reverb. Dylan's real resurgence, *Time Out of Mind*, is still 10 years off, and Lanois will figure there as well. Among other things, *Tell Tale Signs* attempts to wrest those records away from Lanois, a meticulous mood maker whose perfectionism never jibed with Dylan's spontaneity.

Unreleased takes from those two albums make up half of *Tell Tale Signs*, including two different versions of "Dignity," a song Dylan—under Lanois's whip—recorded 20 times for *Oh Mercy*, then mothballed. "Whatever promise Dan had seen in the song was beaten into a bloody mess," Dylan wrote. A woman there to catalogue the tapes left the studio in tears.

Struggle snuffed the life from many of these songs. Widely adored on its release, *Oh Mercy* sounds leaden and humorless

now, rife with the dregs of Dylan's biblical moralism. Yet here's a rockabilly take on "Dignity" that makes moralism do the twist.

Each *Tell Tale Signs* CD opens with a version of "Mississippi," recorded for then dropped from *Time Out of Mind*. That's where Dylan and Lanois got it right, though not without more struggle. "He tried to convince me that song had to be 'sexy, sexy and more sexy,'" Dylan later said. "I know about sexy, too." Lanois wanted a cauldron of hip-shaking drums; Dylan needed only seductive pauses in his phrasing. More casual and less doom-ridden than anything on *Time Out of Mind*, both outtakes lope along with a lazy elegance. Genius.

There's more genius, too: four live cuts, scattered between 1992 and 2003, that make you wish Dylan would release full CDs of those shows; four soundtrack one-offs, the best—"Can't Escape From You," yet another tale of ineluctable desire—from a movie Hollywood never made; a Robert Johnson cover left off the solo acoustic *World Gone Wrong*, doubtless because that album already had enough death and blood. This is the other story *Tell Tale Signs* lays out: Dylan as journeyman, writing songs to order, doing whatever it takes to keep on keeping on.

Eventually, the two stories came together: After his second go-round with Lanois, Dylan began producing himself. He recorded two masterpieces, *Love and Theft* and *Modern Times*, quickly with his touring bands, working up arrangements that sounded ready-made even when they weren't. Just two cuts here come from those sessions, perhaps showing that he knew exactly what he wanted and left little behind. It may have been the first time in his career. "Always prolific but never exact," is how Dylan describes his working methods in *Chronicles*. But that was just the first 60 years.

DOWNLOAD "Dreamin' of You," "Red River Shore," "Cocaine Blues (live)"



## THE CLASH LIVE AT SHEA STADIUM

★★★★

EPIC/LEGACY

**The world's greatest punk band, at the time of "Rock the Casbah," rocking a ballpark**

The show memorialized here was mounted as the Clash were falling apart, with drummer Topper Headon fired and kingpins Joe Strummer and Mick Jones on the outs. At the kind of mega-venue they'd sworn never to play, they were supporting the Who, one of the dinosaurs they'd come to slay in 1977. Only four of the 14 songs were from the pure punk period that preceded 1980's *London Calling*, and thus the album is less sharp than 1999's mix-and-match *From Here to Eternity: Live*. Yet despite it all, *Live at Shea Stadium* is a pleasure. The sonic and theatrical muscle it takes to project to 50,000 people who've paid to see another band adds a sense of purpose that can't transfigure the superb material but does give the music its own embattled character. "Hard rock," you could call this Clash. You could say they rocked harder than the Who, too.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

**DOWNLOAD** "Rock the Casbah," "Clampdown"

## THE FLYING LIZARDS THE FLYING LIZARDS

★★★★★

FOURTH WALL

★★★★

CAROLINE

**Seeming one-hit wonders created bizarre, luminous musical collisions**

Best known for their deliberately off-rhythm, out-of-tune travesty of the Motown standard "Money (That's What I Want)," which they recorded for only \$14, the Flying Lizards' 1980 debut may be the most fun experimental record ever. The "band" was a studio construct of London producer David Cunningham, and the music lurches from Chipmunk-pitched German cabaret to reggae-fied funk to broiled blues. It also grooves like an earthquake, especially on two riveting songs featuring music journalist Vivian Goldman (the Roots later sampled "Her Story"). On 1981's *Fourth Wall*, expatriate American Patti Palladin took over as vocalist; the only evidence of goofiness is a chirpy synthesizer cover of Curtis Mayfield's soulful "Move

On Up." Hallucinatory, ornately textured instrumental collages make up a lot of the album, but its highlight is "Hands 2 Take," in which Palladin rages over film composer Michael Nyman's cyclical orchestral riff.

DOUGLAS WOLK

**DOWNLOAD** "Her Story," "Money (That's What I Want)," "Lovers and Other Strangers"

## PHILIP GLASS GLASS BOX

★★★★

NONESUCH

**NYC cab driver who coined a great repetitive sound, great repetitive sound, great ...**

Almost everyone has heard minimalist composer Philip Glass's music: often just two alternating notes, going *dweedle zweedle* forever through his huge output of operas, film scores, symphonies and chamber music. Though there's plenty of *dweedle* on the 10 discs in *Glass Box*, from 1969 until recent years, this shrewdly chosen collection maximizes his variety: robotic and romantic, Euroclassical and

"1-2-3-4, 1-2-3." It's openly mechanical, but at its best, it's also ecstatic.

JON PARELES

**DOWNLOAD** "Ange des Orages," "Spaceship"

## SARAH McLACHLAN CLOSER: THE BEST OF SARAH McLACHLAN

★★★★

ARISTA

**Canadian pianist learned to whisper to be heard**

Sarah McLachlan began her career wallowing in awfulness, her operatic voice stuck in overdrive, her lyrics self-absorbed, her song structures shapeless. She pilfered the synth-y drama of Annie Lennox but lacked conviction to deliver a troubled lyric like "the night is my companion." Then the Beatles gods descended: *Surfacing*, her 1997 breakthrough and masterpiece, debuts clear verses, slinky rhythms and character-driven narratives like "Building a Mystery," the best example of a woman calling a guy on his shit since Carly Simon's "You're So Vain." This

## NINA SIMONE TO BE FREE: THE NINA SIMONE STORY

★★★★

RCA/LEGACY

**The late "high priestess of soul" was big on drama**

Nina Simone was infernally complicated. In her songs, she was deeply American but convincingly European; a jazz singer-pianist, a Brechtian theatrical talk-singer; a funk soul sister and folkie; a prime civil-rights voice, a gifted square peg and a regular lonely woman. In a mostly good sense, she was manipulative: She squeezed audiences with a mysterious intensity, and this three-disc set is rightly heavy on live tracks. (She discusses her relationship to audiences in the excellent accompanying DVD biopic, filmed in 1970.) Her most famous work is her most dramatically high-handed, but her first major box set—spanning early sessions in the late '50s to the ghostly Rod McKuen song "A Single Woman," from her final album in 1993—doesn't ignore



The Clash: "Looks like one of us didn't read the memo about Funny-Hat Fridays."

exotic. There are dizzying Bach-goes-Krautrock pieces for electric organs, near-swinging world-music percussion in *Powaqqatsi* and the emotional surges of his string quartets. Glass bared his technique in the mathematical rush of *Einstein on the Beach*, with numbers and notes as lyrics, revealing not only repetition but crafty expansion and contraction:

16-song overview traces her trajectory from post-new-age wisp to chart-crushing craftsman to formula peddler (2003's *Afterglow* was a snore). The new "Don't Give Up on Us," a relationship-mender that's sleek on the outside, troubled on the inside, restores her awesomeness.

KAREN SCHOEMER

**DOWNLOAD** "Building a Mystery," "Sweet Surrender"

her comparatively naive early work, when she was just an excellent club singer. As she gained grandiosity and tragic airs, she lost a few things: pitch accuracy, for sure, but also the ability to surprise.

BEN RATLIFF

**DOWNLOAD** "You Can Have Him," "Mississippi Goddam"

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Rodriguez  
Cold Fact  
LIGHT IN THE ATTIC

Before becoming a construction worker, this Mexican-American hippie released a 1970 debut about drugs and crime—small, wonderful and weird.



ZZ Top  
Eliminator  
WARNER BROS.

The beardiest rockers in Texas remade themselves into MTV superstars with this 400-horsepower celebration of hot rods and hot babes.



# THE BYRDS

THEY INVENTED FOLK ROCK IN THE MID-'60S. THEN THEY INVENTED COUNTRY ROCK IN THE LATE '60S  
BY DOUGLAS WOLK

The Byrds, December 1965 (from left): David Crosby, Chris Hillman, Gene Clark, Michael Clarke and Jim McGuinn.



**SINGER-GUITARISTS** Jim (later Roger) McGuinn and David Crosby, singer Gene Clark, bassist Chris Hillman and drummer Michael Clarke got together in 1964, hoping to be L.A.'s answer to the Beatles. They found their calling as the first great folk-rock band, transforming Bob Dylan songs into tightly wound electric marvels, and grew steadily more adventurous across two years of hits. Then everything went sideways: In short order, all but McGuinn peeled off and their commercial fortunes nosedived. Newcomer Gram Parsons became the Byrds' leader, steering them toward country music, but he split after one groundbreaking album, *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, and McGuinn soldiered on. Elbow grease didn't make up for the lost magic, and by 1973 the 11th incarnation of the Byrds had called it quits. Though subsequent reunions were brief and ineffectual, their inventions birthed great music in the '80s (Tom Petty's and R.E.M.'s extrapolations of folk rock) and again recently (bearded buckaroos such as Devendra Banhart). Parsons died in 1973, Clark in 1991, Clarke in 1993. Crosby, a longtime addict, nearly died on many occasions.

## ESSENTIAL

## GREAT

### MR. TAMBOURINE MAN

★★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1965



Their debut proved they were the first U.S. band that could match U.K. rockers—it even

ends with the World War II-era British ballad "We'll Meet Again." The secret was their top half: McGuinn's guitar playing expanded George Harrison's break in "A Hard Day's Night" into an entire genre, and the sun-baked harmonies made the most of their voices' eccentricities. Gene Clark was the only Byrd who had bloomed as a songwriter yet, but four Bob Dylan covers gave them folk cachet and gave Dylan rock credibility.

**DOWNLOAD** "I'll Feel a Whole Lot Better," "The Bells of Rhymney"

### GREATEST HITS

★★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1967



A chronological straight shot through their first four LPs, this became their top-selling record,

and McGuinn's 12-string never chimed as fetchingly as it did on these early hits. If there's a unifying theme, it's disgruntlement with the world as we know it: Only Clark's kiss-off "I'll Feel a Whole Lot Better" and the Dylan come-on "All I Really Want to Do" bother with relationships, and by the second half they're dreaming of escaping into space or beyond.

**DOWNLOAD** "Eight Miles High," "Mr. Tambourine Man," "So You Want to Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star"

### SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO

★★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1968



Though hired as a sideman, 21-year-old Gram Parsons soon became the chief creative force, and

the Byrds headed to Tennessee to record this passionate set of honky-tonk and folk standards and desolate Parsons originals. A commercial disaster, it now sounds like a prophecy of the way Nashville and L.A. embraced each other in the '70s. Parsons had quit by the time it was released, so most of his vocals were removed, but he left his mark: From then on, the Byrds were a country-rock band. (The two-disc reissue appends a pile of Parsons-sung alternate versions and outtakes.)

**DOWNLOAD** "Hickory Wind," "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," "The Christian Life"

### FIFTH DIMENSION

★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1966



The brilliant single "Eight Miles High," inspired by the dreamy drones of Indian music, was

Gene Clark's farewell to the Byrds—he hated flying, and he quit the band soon after they began sessions for their third album. They were short on material (hence two instrumentals and a peculiar cover of "Hey Joe"), but McGuinn stepped up his game, writing a couple of witty science-fiction songs and playing spark-showing lead guitar that lifted ideas from John Coltrane's modal jazz improvisations.

**DOWNLOAD** "Mr. Spaceman," "Why"

### YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY

★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1967



It wasn't even the Summer of Love yet, and the Byrds were already burned out on the '60s.

Opening with an acid-tongued dis of their own profession, "So You Want to Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star," this fourth album articulates their weariness with travel, politics, pop, romance and modernity. Crosby's drug-y "Mind Gardens" overreaches, but he and Hillman were emerging as insightful, adventurous writers. The sole cover, Dylan's "My Back Pages," is a brilliant parting shot to the band's first phase.

**DOWNLOAD** "My Back Pages," "Everybody's Been Burned"

### THE NOTORIOUS BYRD BROTHERS

★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1968



A surprisingly tender, harmonious album, considering the chaos of its birth: David

Crosby was fired after bandmates refused to include his epochal *ménage à trois* tale "Triad" (it's on the reissue), and Michael Clarke split a few months later, leaving the band as a McGuinn-Hillman duo augmented with studio musicians. Still, they seemed to be surging forward, experimenting with electronic psychedelia and country, and paying tribute to nature and the nascent hippie culture. Inexplicably out of print.

**DOWNLOAD** "Draft Morning," "Goin' Back"



## TURN! TURN! TURN!

★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1965



A quick follow-up to their debut, mining very similar territory—the title

track, a biblical text adapted by folkie Pete Seeger, got the same jingle-jangle treatment as "Mr. Tambourine Man" (and hit No. 1), and they re-recorded "It Won't Be Wrong" (from the band's earlier faux Fab Four incarnation as the Beefeaters) and covered a few more Dylan tunes, plus, regrettably, "Oh! Susannah." Once again, singer-tambourinist (and current indie-pop cult hero) Gene Clark, who would quit a few months later, contributes the best originals. **DOWNLOAD** "She Don't Care About Time," "Turn! Turn! Turn!"

## (UNTITLED)

★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1970



Originally a half-live, half-studio double LP (now expanded to a double CD),

it's larded with the excesses of its era—midway through a 16-minute, countrified "Eight Miles High," new member Skip Battin demonstrates why the two scariest words in music are *bass solo*. But McGuinn had been collaborating with theater director Jacques Levy on *Gene Tryp*, a never-produced musical version of Henrik Ibsen's 1867 play *Peer Gynt*, and the four songs from it included here are his best in years. Cover highlight: Leadbelly's coke-head anthem "Take a Whiff on Me."

**DOWNLOAD** "Chestnut Mare," "Lover of the Bayou"

## THERE IS A SEASON

★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2006



A four-CD-plus-DVD survey of their career, it starts with early singles as the Jet Set and the Beefeaters, fills almost the entire first disc with Gene

Clark songs and Dylan covers and digs up a bunch of rarities and live takes to fill out the last two discs, which survey the *Sweetheart-and-after* era. The premise seems to be that they maintained consistent quality through all their lineup changes—which, sadly, isn't true.

**DOWNLOAD** "The Times They Are A-Changin'," "You Don't Miss Your Water"

## DR. BYRDS AND MR. HYDE

★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1969



Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman had split off to form the Flying Burrito Brothers,

so McGuinn assembled a new Byrds, prominently featuring guitarist Clarence White. They were hurting for decent material—the concluding jam/medley is embarrassing—but "Drug Store Truck Drivin' Man," a Parsons-era leftover on which they eviscerate a country-establishment DJ who dissed them, is a venomous delight. The album tanked on release, and McGuinn later admitted it was "more or less contrived"; it's now out of print.

**DOWNLOAD** "Drug Store Truck Drivin' Man"

## BALLAD OF EASY RIDER

★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1969



Their most distracted album: Bob Dylan's contribution to the title track was five

lines scrawled on a napkin, and drummer Gene Parsons (no relation to Gram) and new bassist John York sing their own half-formed songs. Still, the gospel cover "Jesus Is Just Alright" and the faithless Dylan song "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" are sad and stirring, anthems for a peace-and-love battle they knew was just about lost. Out of print.

**DOWNLOAD** "Jesus Is Just Alright"

## LIVE AT THE FILLMORE FEBRUARY 1969

★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2000



Recorded in February 1969, on the *Dr. Byrds and Mr. Hyde* tour, this fuzzy archival

set shows an infamously sloppy live band cleaning up its act and taking cues from the jam-crazy Bay Area scene that had eclipsed the Byrds' L.A. home in the rock underground. The mood perks up on a series of casual country covers that let White show off his chameleonic picking skills—they dip into the Buck Owens and Merle Haggard catalogues—but a medley of early hits is sadly perfunctory.

**DOWNLOAD** "This Wheel's on Fire"

## BYRDMANIAH

★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1971



Producer Terry Melcher drenched it in soggy strings, horns and choruses as a way

of covering up for their laziest songwriting: interminable pastiches of '50s rock & roll, unfunny satire, a throwaway bluegrass instrumental and some half-baked material from the *Gene Tryp* musical. "Somehow I know that everything's gonna work out all right," McGuinn croons, sounding totally unconvinced; Gene Parsons called it "one of my least favorite albums." The death masks on the cover summarize the state of the band. Justly out of print.

**DOWNLOAD** "Glory, Glory"

## FARTHER ALONG

★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1971



Recorded a month after they released *Byrdsmaniah*, the self-produced

final album by the late-model Byrds was intended as a corrective; the repertoire isn't much better, but it's got moments of rustic poignancy and some nice country guitar from Clarence White. McGuinn sings on only a couple of tracks, and his 12-string chime has vanished—he'd pretty much given up on the band by this point, and so had their audience. Blessedly out of print.

**DOWNLOAD** "Tiffany Queen"

## BYRDS

★

ASYLUM/WOUNDED BIRD, 1973



McGuinn was still touring with a pickup band (Hillman even joined

him at the end) when record executive David Geffen convinced the five original Byrds to reunite for an album. By then, they were all saving the good stuff for their solo records; hence this mishmash of leftovers, toss-offs and two Neil Young covers, dominated by David Crosby, who produced it to sound like a cheap imitation of CSNY. The chemistry of their early years is painfully absent—even the harmonies are phoned in. Unsurprisingly out of print.

**DOWNLOAD** "Laughing"

## LIVE AT ROYAL ALBERT HALL 1971

★★★

SUNOAZED, 2008

The most recent Byrds release. Road-hardened by this point, the Clarence White incarnation of the band had been retreading for years—they were touring for *Byrdsmaniah*, which they mostly ignore here in favor of oldies and an a cappella "Amazing Grace." Even McGuinn sounds little more than wearily professional. **DOWNLOAD** "Jamaica, Say You Will"

## THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION

★★★★★

HIP-O, 2007

Gram Parsons, a restless rich kid who jetted around with the Rolling Stones and OD'd at the age of 26, loved country music for its haunted harmonies and fear of sinfulness. Post-Byrds, he formed the Flying Burrito Brothers. The best among many compilations, this replays their '69 and '70 LPs in original order, mixing the Stones with steel guitar and finding dolor and doom. **DOWNLOAD** "Christine's Tune," "Hot Burrito #2," "Wild Horses"

## DAVID CROSBY IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER MY NAME

★★★

ATLANTIC, 1971

These ragged jams and mantras have become a touchstone for young folk bands that love banjos and facial hair. It's also a colossal ego trip, a showcase for Crosby's multitracked voice and famous pals that barely bothers with songs. **DOWNLOAD** "Cowboy Movie"

"Without the Byrds, country music wouldn't be what it is today—and nobody ever talks about that. They were a rock band, but they had Vern Gosdin, a country singer, opening shows for 'em."

—Kenny Chesney





## SCORE

CLASSIC

5★

GREAT

4★

GOOD

3★

MEDIocre

2★

FOUL

1★



Thinking inside the box [clockwise from left]: Jennifer Jason Leigh, Michelle Williams, Emily Watson, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Dianne Wiest, Catherine Keener and Samantha Morton.

## META MADNESS

A PLAYWRIGHT RE-CREATES NEW YORK—AND HIS OWN LIFE—IN A MASSIVE WAREHOUSE BY DAVID FEAR

### SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK

★★★★

**Directed by** Charlie Kaufman  
**Starring** Philip Seymour Hoffman, Samantha Morton, Michelle Williams, Catherine Keener, Emily Watson, Dianne Wiest and Jennifer Jason Leigh

**MOST FILMMAKERS** PLAY God with just one imaginary world. In *Synecdoche, New York*, Charlie Kaufman takes things a step further: The screenwriter turned director acts as puppet master to a control freak choreographing his own alternate reality. Caden Cotard (Philip

Seymour Hoffman) is a theater director who's on a professional high. Only, his wife (Catherine Keener) just left him, and Cotard can't decide whether he wants to be with a theater worker (Samantha Morton) or his lead actress (Michelle Williams). To dull the pain, he mounts a mammoth production based on his life in progress, with actors playing every part, including himself. Soon, doppelgängers get their own doubles, and art imitates life imitates art ad infinitum.

The brain behind such modern classics as *Being John Malkovich* (1999) and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), Kaufman has made a name for himself by rooting around other people's heads. For his directorial debut, he has decided to conduct an unofficial tour of his own noggin. Look past all the meta-references and Mensa-level wordplay (the title is both a literary term and a goof on the city of Schenectady), and what's left is Kaufman's examination of what happens when an existence devoted to creative endeavors becomes eclipsed by them.

You also get the sense that his avatar Cotard—played with Hoffman's usual fearlessness—represents the director's own neurotic obsessiveness. The replica of Cotard's New York

that the character reconstructs in a downtown Manhattan warehouse (and *sub*-warehouses) looks like a film set, and the demons he's exorcising in Kaufman's name feel personal. Not everything works—a perpetually burning house, funny once, is groan-worthy by the gag's 50th appearance—but this messy portrait of an artist as a self-loathing creep will stick with you long after you've figured out how to pronounce the title.

If there are any autobiographical elements to Kevin Smith's **ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORN** (★), however, we sure don't want to

know about them. Zack (Seth Rogen) and Miri (Elizabeth Banks) are two minimum-wage sad sacks who are terminally broke; so naturally, they find a logical solution: directing their own hardcore skin flick. If your idea of hilarity is to listen to people come up with porn-title variations on *Apocalypse Now* and *Lawrence of Arabia*, then you may find Smith's juvenile display of vulgarity absolutely gut-busting. For the rest of us, however, this foulmouthed auteur's latest is simply proof that you actually can make a painfully unfunny movie starring Seth Rogen. We'll put it to you this way: There's a scene in which a character has a load of excrement dumped onto his face; we know exactly how he feels. **B**

### "Pineapple Express"

was a good night out at the theater. It was silly, like a buddy movie meets a pot comedy. It won't change your views or your life, but it will make you laugh."

—Mike D of the Beastie Boys



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ILLUSTRATION BY AUGUST HEFFNER



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No loads, no paths, no maps – Far Cry 2 places you in the middle of a single, twenty square mile tract of brutal and hostile African terrain. The elimination of predefined levels means you have free reign to track down and eliminate your enemies as you see fit. But don't expect the usual canned targets hiding behind corners or springing up from obvious spawning points. The all-new Dunia Engine, designed just for Far Cry 2, delivers dynamic enemy artificial intelligence so you never know when or where to expect enemy resistance.

With over 100 hours of game play across 70 missions, you are in full control. Confront your targets in full frontal assaults or use the cover of darkness and kill them in their sleep, all the while building a reputation for killing that can make later opponents cower at the very sight of you. The expansive world and non-scripted A.I. of Far Cry 2 comes to life on an Alienware computer where multi-core processors and advanced memory options fuel the game engine's intensive real-time elements with zero lag or latency. In Far Cry 2, prepare for the unexpected. With an Alienware computer in your arsenal, your enemies should as well.

**FARCRY2**



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## SCORE

CLASSIC

5★

GREAT

4★

GOOD

3★

MEDIocre

2★

FOUL

1★

## FAKING THE BAND

IT'S GETTING REALLY HARD TO PICK A SIDE IN THE ESCALATING ROCK-GAME WAR BY LIBE GOAD



LAST HOLIDAY SEASON, gamers looking for a virtual rock experience had a fairly clear-cut choice. Those wanting to focus exclusively on "shredding" on a plastic gee-tar went for *Guitar Hero III*. Those yearning for a full-band simulation—guitar, bass, drums, mic—got their groove on with *Rock Band*. But the latest versions of both these titles make picking one over the other far more confusing: They're now essentially the same game.

With *World Tour*, the *Guitar Hero* franchise has become a four-player party, complete with mic, drums and twin guitars (one for lead, the other for rhythm or bass). But *World Tour* does add some cool new features to its gear: Its drum kit comes with two cymbal pads, for more realistic skin-pounding, and the guitars feature a touch-sensitive control surface on the neck, allowing for Eddie Van Halen-style finger-tapping pyrotechnics. The game's biggest innovation is its Music Studio, which lets you create playable tracks (using the guitars and drums and a rudimentary in-game music sequencer) to share online with others.

Meanwhile, the makers of *Rock Band 2* seem content to refine an already successful formula. The Xbox 360 guitars are at last wireless, and the drums are now rubberized pads, as opposed to the hard plastic ones that made an annoying clacking sound when you hit them. There's more of an emphasis on living through your virtual rocker, with a host of new design options, including the ability to create custom band logos that you can have printed on real-life T-shirts.

Ultimately, choosing between these two equally excellent games may come down to the tracks they come with. *Rock Band 2*'s 84-song set list includes cuts from Bob Dylan, AC/DC and what has to be the game makers' biggest coup: Guns N' Roses' new "Shackler's Revenge." Meanwhile, *World Tour* features 85 tracks from the likes of Jimi Hendrix, the Eagles and Michael Jackson. Of course, online downloads are available for both; most impressively, the *Guitar Hero* folks snagged the rights to the entirety of Metallica's new *Death Magnetic* album.

Really, a faux rocker can't go wrong either way. In the spirit of the season, our advice is simple: Choose or lose.

IN THIS BLATANT *Grand Theft Auto* knockoff, you design a gangbanger from scratch and then hit the streets of a fictional Chicago, making money and gaining the respect of your crew. Our favorite move: earning enough cash to buy up some of the in-game stores and then watching our ugly mug appear in advertisements on local billboards. Still, the game is largely about blood-drenched violence, so don't let your entrepreneurial spirit get in the way of a good drive-by shooting.



SAINTS ROW 2  
THQ; XBOX 360, PS3  
★★★★

GOLDEN AXE: BEAST RIDER  
SEGA; XBOX 360, PS3  
★★



THIS REMAKE OF the late-'80s arcade classic is a Dio album cover come to life: You're a scantily clad warrior princess who dismembers legions of ugly beasts with the dexterity of an old-world Italian butcher. The campy, *Xena*-like vibe is fun, but the game play amounts to nothing more than rote hacking and slashing. Unfortunately, there's no two-player co-op mode, which is what made the original *Golden Axe* such a quarter-sucking monster back in the day.

SLIMY ALIENS TAKE over a space station, and you've got the bad luck to show up just in time for lunch. Mashing up influences from *Doom* to *Resident Evil*, this haunted-house-in-space action/adventure is all about scary shit happening—monsters unexpectedly pop through walls and emerge from dark corners—and the frantic gunplay that inevitably follows. It's nothing we haven't seen before, but the ominous plot and deliberate pacing have the feel of a first-rate fright flick.



DEAD SPACE  
EA GAMES; XBOX 360, PS3, PC  
★★★★★

FABLE II  
MICROSOFT; XBOX 360  
★★★★

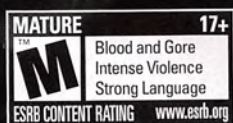


FABLE II IS billed as an expansive sword-and-sorcery role-playing game in which the main character is free to be good or evil, and even marry and have children. The reality is a bit more pedestrian: The game basically comes down to exploring dungeons and engaging in button-mashing combat. There are inventive aspects, though, including a multiplayer system that allows an online friend to jump into your world at any time, lend a hand, then leap back into his own game.



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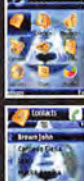
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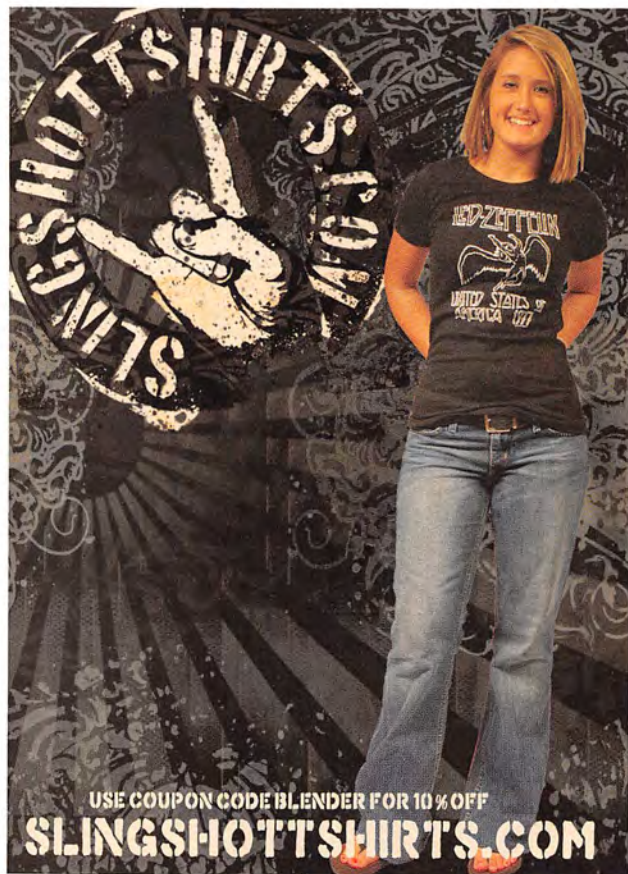
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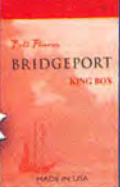
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# Male Enhancement Pills ...

## Is it a Hoax or Do They Really Work?

Dr. Daniel Stein, M.D.



I wish I had a dollar for every patient or person that asked me over the last few years about increasing the size of "that certain part of the male body." The preoccupation with size that men have is a mystery to most women. The fact is it is completely normal for most men to want to be larger. It doesn't matter if they are smaller than average, average, or larger than average. It's even been my experience that guys that are almost too big, so big in fact that many women won't go near them with a ten foot pole (sorry about that) still want to be larger!

I was so intrigued by this fact that I started to do research about the "so called" male enhancement pills that came on the market several years ago. The concept that a simple pill could noticeably increase the size of a man's organ seemed plausible, but I wanted to know more. I had done much research over the years about certain sexually enhancing compounds available, so I believed the concept was sound that a pill could be made to make a man larger.

My first task was to look at some of the ads I had seen in magazines for male enhancement. There were some amazing claims by many of these makers. My personal favorite was a cream that claimed to make men instantly larger. I had to laugh out loud when I read what it said. The ad read, "apply cream, rub vigorously, increase your size." I thought for a minute and then decided you could put virtually anything on a man, including guacamole, and if he rubbed vigorously it would increase his size. Then there was an ad for a pill, that if taken daily, would increase the length of a man by 3 to 4 inches in just a few short days (sorry about the "short" comment).

I'm sorry, but after all those years of medical school, I know enough about anatomy to know that a guy who is 5 inches in length isn't going to add 3 to 4 inches to his little friend unless he buys a rope, gets a large brick, finds a bridge and...well, you get the picture. At about this time I was beginning to think that perhaps these makers hadn't found the magic mixture of compounds I had hoped they might have.

As the founder of both the Stein Medical Institute and the Foundation for Intimacy, I have spent most of my adult life trying to improve men and

convinced that their product really worked, and they claim to have sold over 100 million capsules to men all over the world. "Over 100 million capsules taken by men." With that single declaration, they had my interest. Either Extenze really worked or these guys were the world's greatest snake oil salesmen. So I requested that they send me Extenze formula so I could review it, then we would talk.



I then visited the Extenze.com web site, where I found a page that showed the top twelve adult film stars, all holding Extenze and endorsing it. I thought to myself, "Is it possible Extenze actually works?"

The next day I received the proprietary Extenze formula and there it was, virtually all of the ingredients that I hoped would be in a male enhancement product, 19 pharmaceutical grade nutraceuticals. There was Yohimbe (which used to be available by prescription only,) L-Arginine, Maca...all of it was there.

I contacted the makers of Extenze the very next day and asked them what they needed me for. They explained that they had a desire to have a medical doctor in their T.V. commercials to talk about the effectiveness of the ingredients in Extenze. At that moment an idea sprang into my head. I told them if they would let me improve the formula of Extenze, I would do the commercial for free!

Before I knew it I was working with their

**"they claim to have sold almost a quarter of a billion capsules to men."**

chemists at the manufacturing plant where we added the most revolutionary thing to the formula of Extenze. We added DHEA, also known as the "mother of all hormones." DHEA is the most important human prohormone and is the prohormone that converts into testosterone in men. DHEA levels decrease with the aging. Production peaks in a man's early 20's, and declines about 10% every 10 years. Low levels of testosterone can lead to low sex drive and a smaller sex organ.

After a few more weeks of tweaking the formula of Extenze, we were done. The new Extenze formula has been selling even better than the old formula, with over 75% of sales to repeat customers. Extenze has been on the market for 7 years and has sold almost a quarter of a billion capsules to men all over the world. It doesn't matter if you're 18 or 80 years old. In my opinion Extenze can make you larger, harder and increase both your intensity and pleasure and it is as simple as taking a single tablet daily. Extenze is so sure it would work for anyone that they're sending out a free one-week supply of Extenze for nothing more than the cost of a postage stamp. You can contact them directly at 800-844-3938. I recommend any man healthy enough to engage in sexual activity should try Extenze. You have nothing to lose but a lot to gain. ★

**A Pill That Can Increase Your Size!\***

**"a pill that, if taken daily, would increase the length of a man by 3 to 4 inches."**

women's sexual health. I pride myself on being the best medical doctor I can be and my reputation is important to me. So, when out of the clear blue sky, I got a call from the makers of Extenze, the leader in male enhancement, wanting me to be in one of their TV commercials, I thought, "Boy, did they pick the wrong guy!"

Little did they know that I had done real research into this concept and had recently looked at some of these male enhancement products. But the makers of Extenze seemed to be genuinely



**Just pay for the postage stamp.**

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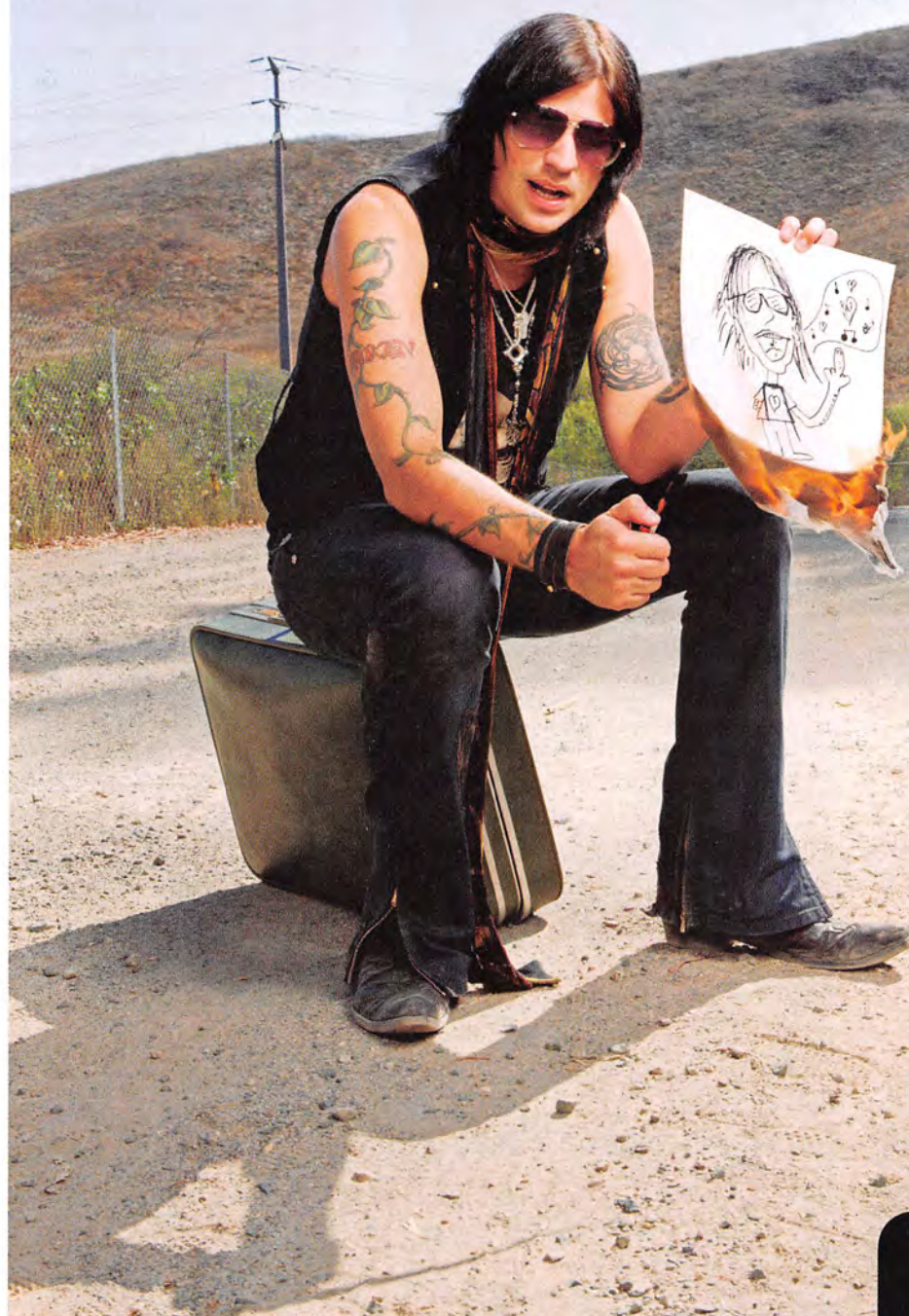




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# Who Does Austin Winkler Think He Is?

BY JOSH EELLS PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAMS + HIRAKAWA



**Nice self-portrait. What's with the middle finger?**

That's a fuck-you to the music industry. Some bands who get a ton of exposure don't sell a third of the records we sell. I've read a lot about how shitty our music is, but it's real, and I have a lot of love for what I do.

**What does your mom call you?**

Austin. It's not like she's gonna call me Sugar Tits!

**Fair point. So what did you want to be when you were growing up, Sugar Tits?**

Until I started smoking pot and playing guitar, I really thought I could be a pitcher. I got a scholarship and everything. Then I started pitching stoned. I was still pretty good, though. I actually threw a no-hitter blazed. The only one who knew was my catcher—because he was stoned with me.

**If we drug-tested you, what would we find?**

Pot. Mushrooms. Ambien is a lifesaver. But mostly I just like to drink a lot. Vodka. Rum. Scope. Whatever's around.

**What's your favorite curse word, and use it in a sentence.**

Cunt—but only when a girl says it. My wife says it all the time. Cunt is the new bitch.

**What are you most afraid of?**

I would say dying ... but I think I'm more afraid of spiders. I had a spider in my apartment once—I left for four hours.

**What's in your wallet right now?**

Let's see. [Opens wallet.] Money from Fiji and Bahrain ... my union card ... driver's license that I think is still suspended ...

**Why is your license suspended?**

I got a DUI in December. I didn't have my lights on. The cop was like, "You smell like alcohol." I go, "I know—I've been drinking!"

**Who do people say you look like?**

The one that pisses me off is Criss Angel. Every time I go to Vegas, it happens. I'm like, "Fuck you! Do I look that old?"

**How would you characterize your taste in sex?**

Passionate. Sensual. Very into the moment. I'm pretty sure I make love like a lesbian.

**Has sex changed since you've been married?**

We actually waited until we got engaged. She wanted to have sex, and I told her no.

**But you were sleeping with plenty of groupies in the meantime, right?**

Ha! I had fun, that's all I'll say.

**Your best night: Give us a number.** I'll give you a number including the band: 32.

**There's only five of you!**

Fort Wayne, Indiana—mmmm!

**What do you look like naked?**

The fucking Grinch. I'm like the really skinny fat guy. Not a whole lot of muscle going on.

**Finally, what would your exes say about you?**

Lies. All lies. **B**

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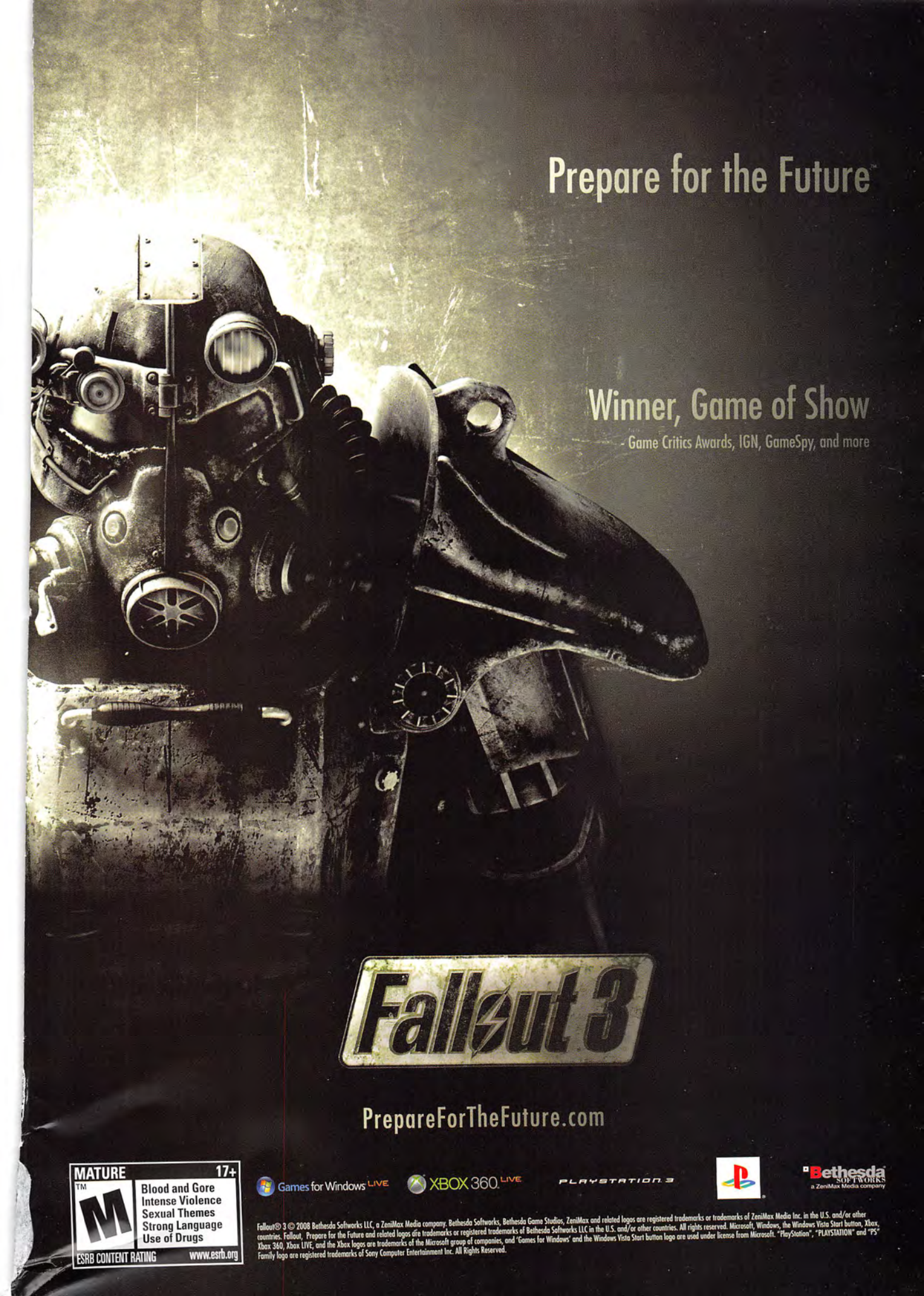
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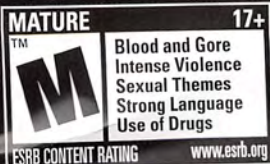
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